NINE SELECTED PLAYS

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A. A. MILNE

From a pen drawing by E. Heber Thompson
(After a photograph by Coster)

NINE SELECTED PLAYS

With Commentary and Acting Notes

by

JOHN HAMPDEN
M A (OXON) M R S T

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THE OLD BULL

By Bernard Gilbert

CHARACTERS

CHARLES ELMITT, *son of the lately dead farmer, Ernest Elmitt ; age* 26
JAMES ELMITT, *brother to Charles ; age* 24
WILLIAM SMITHSON, *their uncle, an auctioneer and publican ; age* 56
TOM BONES, *farm foreman at the Elmitts' ; age* 64
SARAH TINSLEY, *housekeeper at the Elmitts' ; age* 61

The play takes place in the Elmitts' kitchen, in the village of Pantacks

Extract from County Directory

PANTACKS, a village of 412 inhabitants, on the main road from Bly to Barkston. Christopher Harbord, Esquire (Pantacks Manor), is sole landowner. The parish is drained by Pantacks Delph, which runs into the Old Cut. Church—St. Giles. Vicar—Rev. K. Treffry. Wesleyan Chapel. Primitive Methodist Chapel. " Labour in Vain " Inn (Wm. Smithson). " Loggerheads " Inn (F. West). " Rose and Crown " Inn (B. Tarry).

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THE OLD BULL

The curtain rises on the Grange kitchen in the village of Pantacks, one January morning. The Grange is one of the very old farmhouses, and its kitchen would gladden the eyes of an American. The open fireplace, with seats inside the chimney, has a peat fire on its hearthstone which burns with a thick blue fragrant smoke. Inside and around the chimney are various hooks, chains, and racks for hanging kettles and pots, smoking bacon, etc.; and there is a spit, long unused, but still carefully cleaned. On the mantelpiece is a collection of brass candlesticks of various sizes and shapes, an oval tobacco box, and two snuffers complete with trays. The oak beams that support the ceiling are dark with the smoke of generations, and from them hang flitches of bacon, hams, bladders of lard, two muskets, and a rifle. The wallpaper, of floral design, has fortunately toned down into keeping with the fine specimen of a grandfather clock and the copper warming-pans. The floor is of stone slabs without any covering. The furniture is of black oak, and if Pantacks were not down in the Gulland Marshes, the Elmitts would, before now, have learned its value. The table in the centre, the arm-chair, and two small chairs beside it, and four others around the walls, together with the beautiful dresser, would draw a tempting offer.

The fireplace is in the centre of the back wall, and has on each side a casement window with leaded panes and deep window-seats. There is a door to the farmyard in the left wall, and beside it another door opens into what the Elmitts call their "second kitchen," where all the cooking is done. Between these doors hangs a whole range of polished metal dish-covers.

SARAH TINSLEY *is closing the door of a cupboard in the right-hand corner. She is an elderly woman, and has been at the Grange since she was a girl of fourteen. When Mrs. Elmitt died, Sarah became housekeeper as well as cook and general servant. A tiny woman, with scanty white hair, bright blue eyes, and cheeks like rich wrinkled pippins, she is restless, energetic, sharp-voiced, and altogether birdlike. She comes forward with a bottle of sherry, which she places on a tray on the dresser, together with three wine-glasses and a biscuit barrel. Whilst she is doing this,* TOM BONES, *the old farm foreman, comes in from the yard. Five feet high, and nearly as broad, with a rim of white whisker meeting his stubble hair, a waddling gait, and a wrinkled, leathery skin,* TOM *looks exactly like one of the farm animals. He wears dirty boots and leggings, a discoloured smock, and an indescribable hat.*

BONES : I've took some of your hot water, missis, for Brutus.

SARAH : Your Jack said he wasn't very grand last night. What's the matter with him ?

BONES : Colic, I reckon. Pedigree bulls has tender stomachs. It was a queer thing, him being took ill the very day of the poor Mester's funeral, wasn't it ? He thought the world of that old bull !

SARAH : No wonder ! Look what he paid Mester Dane for him.

BONES : He's worth double that to-day. A wonderful bull ! When I fetched him from Fletton, Albert Cook said he was the most promising youngster as they'd ever bred. I wonder who's going to have him. Was there a will ?

SARAH [*looking round apprehensively*] : I'm afraid not. Mester Smithson's coming across directly to talk to the two boys, and then we shall know how things stand.

BONES : I hope to goodness there *is* a will ! If there ain't, they say as the eldest takes all.

SARAH : That would be very unfair to Mester James.

BONES [*dubiously*] : Mester Charles is giving orders all round as if he owned everything. You don't think he does, do you ?

SARAH : I don't feel very easy about it, but we shall know soon. Have you seen Mester James this morning ?

BONES : He's been round as usual, but he hardly spoke a word.

SARAH : He's feeling the Mester's death very much.

BONES : I know which I'd sooner have in the old gentleman's place. [SARAH *puts her finger to her lips.*] I don't care if anybody *does* hear—drinking and gambling and carrying on. If Mester Charles is boss, it'll be a sad day for us all.

SARAH : It will indeed ! But we must hope for the best. I suppose, anyhow, you'll have to flit from the Dovecote into one of the cottages.

BONES [*gloomily*] : There's nothing but changes. Only t'other day Squire Rupert died, as had been at the Manor ever since I was a lad ; and now our good old Mester's gone. Squire Christopher's turning everything upside down with his new-fangled ideas, till nobody knows if they're standing on their heads or their heels.

SARAH : We *shall* know which, if there isn't a will : we shall be on our heels—out in the road—for all our years of service.

BONES : Who'd look after the old bull if I was gone, I don't know.

SARAH : And me, what nursed him from the very first ! But he's never cared for nobody but himself, hasn't Mester Charles.

BONES : The poor Mester sent for me only last Monday, as ever was. Bones, he says, you must take care of Brutus when I'm gone. You under-

stand him, he says ; and I telled him I would as long as I had breath in my body.

SARAH : What was the good of telling you that, if he didn't leave Brutus to Mester James ?

BONES : You should have reminded him to make a will.

SARAH : That was likely, wasn't it ? Our Mester wasn't one as you could say things to—like you can to Mester James.

[*The yard door opens, and* JAMES ELMITT *enters. He is a tall, thin fellow of four-and-twenty, who stoops slightly ; dressed in his Sunday blacks.*

JAMES : How's Brutus now, Tom ?

BONES : We've just been fomenting of him, Mester James, and going to give him another directly.

JAMES : If he isn't better by dinner, we'll wire to Fletton for Enderby Hicks. It's unfortunate being Barkston Show to-morrow.

BONES : I know he'd a took the first prize.

JAMES [*sitting down in the ingle-nook and lighting a cigarette*] : Well, he can't go, and that's certain ! But it's no good worrying about it, Tom ; there'll be another day.

BONES : I'll go and have another look at him. [*Shaking his head mournfully*] I'm sure he'd a took the first prize. [*He waddles toward the yard door.*

SARAH : We shall be wanting some more turf, Mester James. We must keep a good fire up this cold weather.

JAMES : We shan't run short of that, shall we, Tom ?

BONES : We took enough out of the Fen last summer to keep us going for three winters. [*Exit.*

SARAH [*going nearer to* JAMES] : Did you find a will ?

JAMES [*shaking his head slowly*] : We've hunted everywhere, high and low ; but I'm afraid father left it too late.

SARAH : That wasn't like the poor dear Mester.

JAMES : I can't understand it at all, Sarah. When he told me that " things would be all right," I never gave it another thought.

SARAH : What about Lawyer White ? Your father always went to him.

JAMES : If he'd had a will, we should have heard from him before now.

SARAH [*lowering her voice*] : You don't think it's been done away with ?

[JAMES *shakes his head, and* SARAH *is about to say something further, when she hears steps coming down the stone corridor, and taking from the table the cloth with which she had dusted the wine-glasses, retires into her own kitchen. As she closes the door,* CHARLES ELMITT *enters on the right, and crosses to the yard door, whistling as he goes. He sees* JAMES *in the ingle-nook and stops.*

The eldest son of the dead farmer is inclined to stoutness, although not much older than his brother, and if it were not for his out-of-door life would already begin to look bloated. His clothes have been cut by Noel Andrews—the Bly sporting tailor—and his leggings are highly polished.

CHARLES [*in a jeering voice, giving* JAMES *a sharp poke with his riding whip*] : Now then, wake up, sloomy sides ; you're always dreaming.

JAMES [*staring into the fire*] : I was thinking of the poor old Governor.

CHARLES [*leaning against the fireplace, opposite* JAMES] : Your thinking won't bring him back to life.

JAMES : He was a good father to us, Charles.

CHARLES [*sneering*] : You'll find it more important to be a good brother to me now.

JAMES [*aroused by this, and coming out of the ingle-nook*] : Oh, why should I ?

CHARLES : The sooner you realize *that* the better for you.

JAMES : I don't know why you're talking like this. Father said he'd provided for me.

CHARLES : I'll tell you once for all what he did, and then you'll know. The dividing of the property is left entirely in my hands, as the eldest. Those were the old man's very words.

JAMES : But he told me I was provided for.

CHARLES : So you are ! He left it to me to provide for you, so let's have no nonsense.

JAMES : We'll see what Uncle William says.

CHARLES [*seeing the sherry, and helping himself*] : Uncle William ! He always wants to shove his nose into everything. He said he was coming over this morning to talk to us, and I shall listen to what he says—but that's all !

JAMES : I can't understand it.

CHARLES : Perhaps you expected to be left one of the farms. [*Laughing*] I'm master now, and I can tell you things are going to be very different. We've been cluttered up long enough with a lot of doddering old fools like Bones and Casswell.

JAMES [*horrified*] : You won't sack Bones ! Father said there wasn't a more trusty man with stock this side the Gulland. He's worked here all his life.

CHARLES : Time he had a change, then. The old man pleased himself, and I'm going to do the same.

JAMES : Father promised Bones he shouldn't be pushed on one side : I heard him.

CHARLES : I've nothing whatever to do with other folk's promises. If Bones was to square himself up and be civil, I might keep him.

JAMES : He's too old to alter now. But what's his manners amount to ?

CHARLES : A good deal too much for me. I'm blowed if the men aren't getting to be as good as the masters

nowadays. I don't know as they aren't better off than us.

JAMES: You wouldn't change places, though.

CHARLES [*filling his pipe*]: I've seen our chaps that close together on a stack that they couldn't move their forks for fear of brogging one another. But I'll alter that!

JAMES: They may be slow, but they're steady. Don't be too sharp, Charles.

CHARLES: And don't you be so fauce, Jimmy. You'll have as much as you can manage to keep your own place, without sticking up for that lazy gang.

[*The conversation ceases on the appearance of* SARAH *from her kitchen. She hesitates which to address, and looks tactfully between them as she speaks.*

SARAH: There's a man by the name of Patchett from Mester Titus Ambrose's wants to know where you want the threshing machine putting.

CHARLES [*authoritatively*]: Go and arrange it with him, Jimmy. We shall want him here first.

[JAMES *goes out, and* CHARLES *takes another glass of sherry.* SARAH *is about to protest, but thinks better of it.* CHARLES *seats himself in the arm-chair, which he pushes back from the table.*

SARAH: Where's the black tie you wore at the funeral, Mester Charles?

CHARLES: I've something better to do than sit and mope in blacks. [*Stretching his legs out luxuriously*] A rare farmer Jimmy would make! A foreman's all he's fit for, and that's what he's going to be. I've been planning things out a bit this morning, Sarah.

SARAH [*non-committally*]: Oh!

CHARLES: I can do as I like now everything belongs

Fauce (Lincolnshire), impertinent, presumptuous: nearly always addressed to children.

to me ; and one of the first things is, I'm going to be married right away !

SARAH : Not directly after the funeral, surely ?

CHARLES : I shall put Jimmy in the Dovecote farm-house instead of Bones, and, if he likes, you can keep house for him.

SARAH : Will the Squire let you keep both farms ? Your father said he was the only farmer on any estate round here as was allowed to have two such houses ; and that was only on account of his taking the Dovecote over in the bad times, when nobody else would have it.

CHARLES : I know how to manage the Squire. I'm going to straighten things up all round, and shan't let any silly old ideas stand in *my* way, any more than he's done. That yew's coming down.

SARAH : Mester Charles, you can't do that ! The old tree was here in your great-grandfather's time.

CHARLES : I don't care a damn about that ! It shades the front windows, and it's coming down now—right away ! You'll hear it directly.

[*Flabbergasted by this piece of news,* SARAH *goes through the door on the right to see for herself what is happening in the front garden.* CHARLES *rises and pours himself out a third glassful of sherry as* BONES *enters from the yard.*

BONES [*bluntly*] : What's this our Jack tells me about the old bull being got ready to go to the Show ?

CHARLES [*tossing off the sherry*] : Say *Sir*, when you speak to me.

BONES : What for ?

CHARLES : Because I'm master.

BONES : Oh ! . . . all right !

CHARLES [*sitting down and trying to look like his father used to*] : Now then, what is it you want ?

BONES : What's this our Jack tells me about the old bull being got ready to go to the Show ?

CHARLES : Haven't I just told you to say *Sir*, when you speak to me ?

BONES : He's not fit to go to no Shows.

CHARLES : That's for me to say.

BONES : Mester James has had a look at him, and says he can't go.

CHARLES [*furiously*] : What the devil is it to do with him or you ? I say he *is* going.

BONES : You must be crazed.

CHARLES [*recovering himself*] : I've told you what to do, and that's plenty.

BONES : That's all very well, but you don't know nothing about *bulls*. I was tending to 'em before you was ever thought of.

CHARLES : Yes, you're old-fashioned enough.

BONES : You won't find many as knows more about stock than me, and chance the ducks ! Old Mester had sense enough to let me alone. Bones, he says to me many a time, Bones, you might almost have been a bull yourself. Of course, you can cut old Brutus up and make soup of him, but if you want to do yourself any good you must hearken to me.

CHARLES : And if you want to do *yourself* any good you'll do what I tell you.

[*A dull crash is heard, and the kitchen shakes slightly.*

BONES : What's yon ?

[*Before* CHARLES *can answer,* SARAH *comes in from the corridor, looking very upset.*

SARAH : It's down ! It's down !

CHARLES : Of course it's down !

SARAH : You mark my words, Mester Charles, cutting that old yew down'll bring you no luck.

BONES : You don't mean to say——

CHARLES [*violently*] : You'd better both of you understand right away that I'm master here now. You're too fond of forgetting your places. I don't want any back talk from *servants*, and I'm not going to have it.

SARAH [*losing control*]: What do you know about servants; trying to lord it over everybody? And me what nursed you as a baby—a nasty-tempered one you was and all.

CHARLES [*trying hard to look dignified*]: That's enough, Sarah.

SARAH [*with immense scorn*]: Sitting there, trying to look like your father! It isn't five minutes since you was running about in petticoats and squalling for me to pick you up.

CHARLES [*losing all control*]: Get out of this kitchen. I'll sack you!

TOGETHER
- SARAH: Sack me! What's been here since I was fourteen! We'll see what Mester Smithson says to that!
- BONES: Steady on, Mester Charles, steady on! You can't run at things a-that-ow!
- CHARLES [*shouting at the top of his voice to try and drown them*]: Shut up! Clear out! Shut up!

[*At the height of the tumult the yard door opens and* WILLIAM SMITHSON *comes in, followed by* JAMES. UNCLE WILLIAM, *the landlord of the "Labour in Vain" Inn, is also an auctioneer and valuer, and looks entirely prosperous. He is dressed in a blue suit of good cloth, and has mutton-chop whiskers, grey hair, and a comfortable paunch. There is a mourning-band round his left arm, and another round his wide-brimmed bowler. He takes instant command of the situation, speaking in a powerful bass voice.*

UNCLE WILLIAM: Hallo! Hallo! What's all this noise about?

SARAH: The new mester's sacking everybody.

CHARLES: I will, if they don't shut up.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*putting his hand up for order, and seating himself in the arm-chair at the table, whilst*

the others cluster round him]: Now tell me all about it. [*This request is immediately fatal.*

TOGETHER {
CHARLES: I'm master here, aren't I? What I say is law, and the sooner everybody gets settled down to that, the better.
SARAH: He's no business to go on so soft, trying to turn me out into the street, what's been here since I was fourteen.
BONES: I'm all for bulls, I am, but if you don't treat 'em fair, what can you expect but trouble.
JAMES [*to* SARAH]: Now, now, Sarah, wait a minute! [*To* BONES] Be quiet, Tom!
}

UNCLE WILLIAM [*banging his fist on the table and uttering a terrific roar*]: NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! [UNCLE WILLIAM'S *bellow is so terrible that it brings them all to a standstill. More cautious this time, he points his finger at* CHARLES, *and says*] Now, Charles, you first.

CHARLES: I'm master here, and I'll have no cheek from nobody.

SARAH: You started it, talking about getting rid of Mester James and me and Tom, and going and chopping the old yew down.

CHARLES: I shall do just what I like. I'm master.

UNCLE WILLIAM: How do you know you're master?

BONES: Ay!

SARAH: Ah!

CHARLES: I know right enough. There's no will, and everything's mine.

JAMES: It's a poor lookout for me, then, uncle.

UNCLE WILLIAM: That's what I've come to talk about.

CHARLES [*arrogantly*]: You can talk, all of you, but to ease your minds I'll tell you that father said he was leaving the dividing of the property in *my*

hands as the eldest. [*All look aghast, except* UNCLE WILLIAM.] So that's all there is about it !

UNCLE WILLIAM : Have you done, Charles ?

CHARLES : Yes, I have.

UNCLE WILLIAM : Then I'll begin. [*Unbuttoning his coat, he draws a long, sealed envelope from an inner pocket.*] I'll now read your father's will.

CHARLES : What's that ?

JAMES : I felt sure there was one.

[BONES *and* SARAH *nudge each other.*

CHARLES : How came you to have it—all this time ?

UNCLE WILLIAM : I am executor. [*He pauses to let this sink in.*] Your father gave me this will just before Christmas, when he began to feel he wasn't going to get better, and he charged me to say nothing about it to any one until after the funeral. [*He glances at* CHARLES.] He said he didn't want to have any wrangling over his dead body.

CHARLES : Well ! It makes no difference. I've told you what's in it.

[*He looks at* BONES *and* SARAH, *and indicates by a jerk of his head that they are both to leave. They turn to go.*

UNCLE WILLIAM : No ! You both stop here.

CHARLES : I'm not going to have servants listening to my private affairs.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*blandly*] : They're mentioned in the will.

CHARLES [*staggered*] : Oh ! . . . But they needn't hear it all.

UNCLE WILLIAM : They've as much right to hear it all as you have.

CHARLES [*sulkily*] : Let's have it then.

UNCLE WILLIAM : All in good time. [*He takes his glasses out of their case and puts them on.*] When you're my age and weight, my lad, you won't hurry. [*He breaks open the seal, draws the will out of its envelope, and begins to read.*] " This is the Will of

me, Ernest Elmitt, farmer, of Pantacks. Squire Harbord has been kind enough to say that my sons may carry on the two farms, so I leave all my property to be divided by my eldest son, Charles, according to the instructions below. There is the live and dead stock and implements for 386 acres at the Grange Farm, and the live and dead stock and implements for 293 acres at the Dovecote Farm, the money at the Old County Bank at Bly, the furniture at the Grange, and anything else that may belong to me at my death. Lastly, my pedigree bull, Brutus, who will make anybody's fortune if taken care of. [BONES *nods his head so violently that* SARAH *has to restrain him.*] Whichever of my sons takes the Dovecote shall pay to my faithful foreman, Tom Bones, the sum of One hundred pounds whenever he leaves, and whichever takes the Grange shall do the same for my faithful servant, Sarah Tinsley. But I hope neither of them will go as long as they live. [JAMES *quietly pats* SARAH *on the back.*] All my property mentioned above is to be divided by my son Charles into two lists, and—[UNCLE WILLIAM *pauses dramatically*] and my son James shall have the first pick."

CHARLES: I don't believe a word of it. Father told me different. He said I was to divide things up just as I liked.

UNCLE WILLIAM: So you do! It says so, doesn't it?

CHARLES [*overtaxed*]: Oh! . . . That's all right, then.

UNCLE WILLIAM: Let me finish. "These lists shall be signed by both my sons and handed to William Smithson, my wife's brother. I have appointed William to be my Executor, and leave to him the sum of Twenty-five pounds and Grandfather Abraham's brass tobacco-box. Signed at Bly in the presence of Arthur Dickinson, lawyer's clerk, and Samuel Lupton, lawyer's clerk.—ERNEST ELMITT."

CHARLES: That will was never drawn by a lawyer,

and I don't believe it will hold water. I'm the eldest son, and I know what father told me.

UNCLE WILLIAM : Your father wrote that will himself, Charles, and took it to Lawyer White for him to look it over. Lawyer White, of course, wanted to put it in long legal words, but your father wouldn't have that. He said he wanted it to be his own words in his own writing, so as there could be no wrangling about what he meant. I'll pay you your proper fee, he says to Lawyer White, for making my will, but I don't want it altered unless there's anything in it as isn't water-tight. Lawyer White conned it over and owned—at the finish—as it was a good will, and it wouldn't profit any one to try and upset it.

BONES : You take Brutus, Mester James.

CHARLES [*venting his rage on* BONES] : Clear out ! I'll sack you !

UNCLE WILLIAM : So you're taking the Dovecote, are you ?

CHARLES : What do you mean ?

UNCLE WILLIAM : Bones goes with the Dovecote. If you take that, you can sack him all right, so long as you pay him his hundred pounds.

SARAH : So you'd no right to have that old yew cut down, after all !

CHARLES [*in a fighting rage*] : Who asked you to speak, you vixen ?

SARAH : You're not my mester, thank goodness !

CHARLES : I *am* master, and I'll sack you as well.

UNCLE WILLIAM : Then it's the Grange you're going to have, is it ? [CHARLES *looks puzzled.*] You can't very well sack Sarah unless you take the Grange.

SARAH : And give me my hundred pounds.

[CHARLES *by this time is completely befogged ; and looks it. The others laugh at his predicament.*

CHARLES : It's a lot of rot, and I'm damned if I'm going to stand it. You can all go——

UNCLE WILLIAM [*interrupting him sharply*]: That's enough, Charles; I won't have it.

CHARLES: Oh, won't you?

UNCLE WILLIAM: No, I won't! *I'm* master here at present.

CHARLES: Oh no, you're not!

UNCLE WILLIAM: Yes, I am. I'm executor, and I'm going to execute without fear or favour; so let's get to business. You make your two lists out.

[JAMES *has whispered in* SARAH'S *ear, and she now produces a packet of writing paper, a pen, and a bottle of ink, which she puts on the table.*

CHARLES [*sulkily*]: All right, then!

SARAH: You won't want us any more, Mester Smithson, shall you?

UNCLE WILLIAM: No, thank you, Sarah. [*He glances at the dresser, and* SARAH, *seeing the look, gives an exclamation of dismay, and fetches the tray of refreshments from the dresser.*] Get out two more glasses, Sarah.

[*Whilst* SARAH *fetches these,* JAMES *reaches down the oval tobacco-box from the mantelpiece, and gives it to* UNCLE WILLIAM, *who looks at it affectionately and drops it in his coat pocket. He then pours sherry into the five glasses, and they all drink.* SARAH *then goes out.*

CHARLES [*to* BONES, *who is following* SARAH]: Just hang about a few minutes, Bones: I may want to know something about the stock.

[BONES *nods shortly, and goes out, muttering to himself about the old bull wanting him.*

UNCLE WILLIAM [*to* CHARLES, *who is sitting on the left of the table, sucking the end of his pen*]: Come along, Charles. We're waiting.

CHARLES: How can I, with you both staring at me like stuck rats! [*He scratches his head, licks the pen nib, writes something on one of the two sheets of paper in front of him; then looks up.*] You wouldn't

want the biggest house to live in, Jimmy. [JAMES *says nothing to this.*] If the two farms were the same size, it would be easy. [*Irritably*] Say something, can't you ?

JAMES : There's nothing for me to say. You make your lists out, and I'll take which I want.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*taking more sherry*] : That's it. Make the lists out, Charles.

[CHARLES *scratches his head again, gives the pen another dip in the ink, then stares hopelessly at the paper. As this doesn't get him any further, he turns in his chair and shouts* " BONES." BONES *comes in unwillingly, still muttering about the bull.*

CHARLES : How many sheep are there in the far field by Isaac Cheetham's ?

BONES : There's 87 in the grass field, and 93 in the fallows, but one of them died yesterday, and I aren't sure but what we shan't lose another before the day's done. That's the worst of sheep ! Give me a good bull, I say.

[CHARLES *writes, whilst* BONES *speaks in a hoarse whisper to* JAMES.

BONES : You pick the old bull, Mester James.

JAMES [*hushing him*] : We'll see, Tom.

BONES [*refusing to be hushed*] : I'm all for bulls, I am.

CHARLES : Which of the farms does that new Yankee binder go with ?

BONES : Sometimes one, and sometimes t'other.

CHARLES : Yes, but which of 'em does it *belong* to ?

BONES : This year we had her first at the Grange ; last year she was first at the Dovecote, and the year afore that we lent her first to George Baldock.

CHARLES [*throwing down his pen and rising*] : How the devil can I put everything down on two lists ! [*He stares angrily at the others ; then reseats himself, takes two fresh sheets of paper, and scribbles hastily on the top of each.*] That's it. Here you are, Jimmy !

[*He offers one of the papers to* JAMES, *who takes it.*] I stop here in the Grange and keep Brutus, while you go to the Dovecote.

UNCLE WILLIAM: Have you put that on your lists, Charles? [CHARLES *nods.*] Then let's have a look at them. [JAMES *hands his to* UNCLE WILLIAM *promptly, and* CHARLES *does the same reluctantly.* UNCLE WILLIAM *examines the lists in turn, reading out, "The Dovecote Farm and all that goes with it;" and "The Grange Farm and all that goes with it, including the pedigree bull, Brutus."*] That's your two lists, is it?

CHARLES: Yes!

UNCLE WILLIAM: Very well, then; James, you have the first pick.

CHARLES [*hastily*]: Oh no, he doesn't! He takes what I offer him.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*firmly*]: James has the first pick.

CHARLES: He isn't going to have the Grange, nor yet Brutus.

UNCLE WILLIAM: He is, if he picks them.

CHARLES: Then I shall put Brutus on the Dovecote list.

JAMES [*promptly*]: Then I can pick the Dovecote.

CHARLES [*snatching up both lists*]: You won't!

UNCLE WILLIAM: That's what the will says, Charles—he has the first pick.

BONES [*unable to restrain himself*]: Stick to the old bull, Mester James, and he'll stick to you. He's a good 'un.

SARAH [*who is now standing in the doorway, taking a step forward and pulling at* BONES'S *smock*]: Be quiet!

BONES: I'm all for bulls, I am.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*rapping on the table*]: This won't do! Charles, you must offer James the choice, according to the will, and then abide by it.

CHARLES [*as the full horror of the situation dawns upon*

him] : Do you mean to say that, however I draw the lists up, Jimmy can pick which he likes ?

UNCLE WILLIAM : That's what the will says.

CHARLES : Well, I'm damned !

[*He sits down again, and presently begins to make two fresh lists.*

BONES : Don't you let old Brutus go, Mester James. [SARAH *tries to keep him quiet.*] But it's the old bull.

SARAH : It's the old goat, I think—you and your whiskers !

BONES : He's worth his weight in gold. You don't know that old bull, or you'd talk different.

[*A voice is heard outside, calling urgently for "Mester Bones."* TOM, *hearing this, turns and hurries out into the yard.*

CHARLES [*putting down his pen with an air of relief*] : There you are ! I've done 'em !

UNCLE WILLIAM : And are you prepared to abide by them ?

CHARLES : Yes !

UNCLE WILLIAM : Then, James, you look at them carefully and make your choice.

[JAMES *leans over* CHARLES'S *shoulder to look at the two lists.* CHARLES'S *hand is resting casually on the bottom of one of the sheets, and when* JAMES *tries to get it away,* CHARLES *holds it down.*

JAMES : I want to see what's at the bottom of that.

UNCLE WILLIAM [*very sharply*] : Now then, Charles.

JAMES [*taking it up as* CHARLES *releases it*] : I thought so ! He was hiding Brutus. I'll have this list.

CHARLES [*snatching it from him*] : Oh no, you won't !

UNCLE WILLIAM [*speaking in his sternest and most formidable manner*] : Charles, you're behaving like a child, and I'm not going to stop here all the morning to be made a fool of. Do you think we're all idiots ?

CHARLES [*in despair*] : I can't make any more lists

out. Jimmy, you take the Grange, and I'll take the Dovecote and Brutus. That's as fair as I can do.

JAMES : Well—that's the fairest offer we've had yet.

UNCLE WILLIAM : Let's see it down on paper.

[CHARLES *writes again on two fresh sheets and hands them to* JAMES.

JAMES : Yes, I think that's about fair. [*He considers for a moment ; then turns to* UNCLE WILLIAM.] I'll stop here in the Grange.

CHARLES : And I go to the Dovecote and take Brutus.

UNCLE WILLIAM : I suppose you do know, James, that Colishaw Bell offered your father six hundred and seventy guineas for Brutus, at Holt Foal Fair last September ?

JAMES : I was there with father—but I'd like to stop in the old home.

UNCLE WILLIAM : Very well, then. Are you both agreed on that ?

JAMES : Yes, uncle. [CHARLES *nods.*

UNCLE WILLIAM : Well . . . I don't think you could have done it much evener, taking everything all round. Now you must both sign your names underneath these lists, and Sarah and I'll witness the signatures. [*All sign.* UNCLE WILLIAM *folds up the two lists and puts them with the will into the envelope.*] Now I must turn it all over to Lawyer White.

JAMES [*to* SARAH] : Won't poor old Tom be disappointed ?

SARAH : I'm very thankful as you've got the old home, Mester James.

UNCLE WILLIAM : I must get off to Bly——

[*The door bursts open and* BONES *waddles in from the yard at top speed, the picture of consternation.*

BONES : The old bull, the old bull ! Oh dear ! Oh dear ! The old bull !

ALL : What ? What's the matter ? What is it ?

BONES : When I went out to him, he just raised one horn in the air, as much as to say good-bye, then

shut his eyes. Now he lays yonder with his tail straight out, and never a breath in his body. I never ought to have left him. Oh dear! Oh dear! What would the old Mester have said?

CHARLES: That alters everything. Give me the lists back. [*He tries to snatch the envelope.*

UNCLE WILLIAM [*holding him off, and tucking the envelope away into his inner pocket*]: Oh no, my boy! [*He buttons up his coat.*] When you'd signed the lists, you both stood at your own risk. You can't change any more.

SARAH: Cutting down that old yew hasn't brought you any luck, Mester Charles.

BONES [*speaking sadly and slowly*]: There wasn't another bull like him nowhere. We shall never see his likes again.

CURTAIN

ALLISON'S LAD

By Beulah Marie Dix

Allison's Lad was originally produced by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts at the Carnegie Lyceum, New York, on December 23, 1910

ORIGINAL CAST

Colonel Sir William Strickland	Abner W. Cassidy
Captain George Bowyer . .	James W. Mott
Lieut. Robert Goring . . .	Gerald Quina
(*of the Cavalier Party*)	
Francis Hopton	Sidney K. Powell
Tom Winwood	Donald Macdonald
(*Gentlemen Volunteers*)	
Colonel John Drummond .	Le Roy Clemens
(*of the Roundhead Party*)	

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ALLISON'S LAD

SCENE.—*The village of Faringford, in the western midlands of England*

PERIOD.—*The close of the Second Civil War, autumn* 1648

It is midnight of a cheerless autumn day, with a drizzle of slow rain. In an upper chamber of the village inn of Faringford, lit by guttering candles and a low fire that smoulders on the hearth, are gathered five gentlemen of the Cavalier party, made prisoners that morning in a disastrous skirmish.

In a great armchair by the hearth, at stage L., *sits their leader,* SIR WILLIAM STRICKLAND. *He is a tall, keen man of middle age, of the finest type of his party, a gallant officer and a high-souled gentleman. He has received a dangerous wound in the side, which has been but hastily dressed, and he now leans heavily in his chair, with eyes closed, almost oblivious of what goes on about him.*

His captain, and friend of long standing, GEORGE BOWYER, *a sanguine, stalwart gentleman of* STRICKLAND'S *own years, has planted himself in the centre of the room, where he is philosophically smoking at a long pipe, while he watches the play at the rude table, which stands at the stage* R.

Round the table, on rough stools, GORING, HOPTON, *and* WINWOOD *sit dicing and smoking, with a jug of ale between them for the cheering of their captivity.* GORING *is a swaggering young soldier of fortune;* HOPTON, *a gentleman of the Temple, turned soldier, with something of the city fop still to be traced in his bearing. He has been wounded, and bears about his forehead a blood-flecked bandage.* WINWOOD, *the third gamester, is a mere lad of seventeen, smooth-faced, comely, with a gallant carriage.*

It is to be noted that the men play but half-heartedly. Indeed, the cheerlessness of the midnight hour, in the dim chamber, with the rain tapping on the mullioned windows, may well bring home to them the dubiousness of their captive state and set them to anxious question of what the dawn may have in store. GORING, *of the three the most hardened and professionally a soldier, is the first to speak, as he throws the dice.*

GORING : Cinq and tray !

WINWOOD : The main is yours, Rob Goring.

GORING : That's a brace of angels you owe me, Frank Hopton.

HOPTON : Go ask them of the scurvy Roundhead had the stripping of my pockets.

BOWYER [*with the good-humoured contempt of the professional for the amateur*] : The more fool you to bear gold about you when you ride into a fight !

WINWOOD : The devil fly off with the money ! The rebels have taken my horse—a plague rot them !

GORING : Faith, I'd care not, if the prick-eared brethren had not got me, and got me fast. 'Tis your throw, Tom Winwood.

[WINWOOD *takes the dice-box, but pauses, anxiously awaiting an answer to* HOPTON'S *next question.*

HOPTON : What think you, Captain Bowyer ? Are they likely to admit us speedily to ransom ?

[BOWYER *shakes his head, smiling, half indifferent.*

GORING : You're swift to grumble, Frank. You've not been yet ten hours a prisoner. Throw, Tom, a wildfire burn you !

WINWOOD [*casting the dice*] : There, then ! And vengeance profitable gaming ! We can't muster four farthings amongst us.

GORING : Curse it, man, we play for love and sport. I've never yet had enough of casting the dice. Look you [*casts the dice*], I better you by three.

WINWOOD : On my life, no ! I threw a tray and a quatre.

GORING : Go to with your jesting ! You mean a tray and deuce !

WINWOOD : Tray and quatre I threw.

GORING [*starts to his feet, with his hands leaping to draw the sword which, as a prisoner, he no longer wears*] : Will you give me the lie to my teeth ?

WINWOOD [*pluckily springs to his feet, with the same impulse*] : Ay, if you say I threw——

[*At the sound of the angry voices and of the stools thrust back,* STRICKLAND *opens his eyes and glances towards the brawlers.*

BOWYER [*laying a heavy hand upon a shoulder of each*] : Hold your tongues, you shuttle-headed fools !

[*Thrusts* GORING *down into his seat.*

HOPTON : You'll rouse the Colonel, and he ill and wounded. Sit you down again !

WINWOOD [*dropping sullenly into his place*] : Yet 'twas a tray and quatre.

GORING : Frank, you saw the cast. A tray and deuce, and I will so maintain it.

[*The three at table talk heatedly in dumb show,* HOPTON *playing the peacemaker, until at last he wins the disputants to shake hands. Meantime* BOWYER *has gone anxiously to* STRICKLAND'S *side.*

BOWYER : How is it with you, Will, old lad ? Your wound is easier ?

STRICKLAND : My wound ? 'Tis nothing, I tell you.

BOWYER : Why, then, take heart ! Matters might well be worse.

[*He takes a candle from the chimney-piece, and relights his pipe.*

STRICKLAND : Cold comfort, George.

BOWYER : We are defeated—prisoners—yes, I grant you. Yet we have fought our best. And for the future—by this light, our enemies have used us

handsomely so far! No doubt they'll speedily accept of ransom.

STRICKLAND [*with eyes fixed on* WINWOOD]: From my heart I hope so!

BOWYER: Aye, to be taken thus in his first fight 'tis pity for little Tom Winwood.

STRICKLAND: You say——

BOWYER: 'Tis of the lad yonder you are thinking.

STRICKLAND: Yes, I was thinking of Allison's lad.

[*As the result of* HOPTON'S *persuasion,* WINWOOD *at that moment is most heartily drinking a health to* GORING.

BOWYER: My cousin Allison's boy. Look but upon him now! A half-minute agone he and Rob Goring were ready to fly at each other's throats, and now they drink good fellowship together. Faith, by times young Tom is monstrous like unto his father.

STRICKLAND: Your pardon! Tom is his mother's son, Allison's lad every inch of him—every thought of him. There's no taint of the father in the boy.

BOWYER: Yes, I wonder not that you speak thus of Jack Winwood. 'Twas a damnable trick he served you when he won Allison from you with his false tales.

STRICKLAND: Ay, and wellnigh broke her heart thereafter with his baseness. You stood beside me, George, there at Edgehill, when we looked upon the death-wound—in his back!

BOWYER: Poor wretch! Gallant enough at the charge, but at two o'clock in the morning he'd no more courage than——

STRICKLAND: He was a coward, and false from first to last. For God's sake, George, never say that boy is like his father! For his mother's sake——

BOWYER: Ay, 'twould go near to killing Allison, should Tom prove craven.

STRICKLAND: He'll never prove craven. He's his

mother's son. Let be, George! I'm in no mood for speech.

[BOWYER *goes back to the table, where* WINWOOD, *in the last minutes, has played with notable listlessness and indifference.*

HOPTON: 'Tis your cast, Tom.

WINWOOD: Nay, but I'm done.

GORING: Will you give over?

WINWOOD: But for a moment. My pipe is out.

[*Rises and goes to* STRICKLAND.

HOPTON: Come, Captain! In good time! Bear a hand with us.

[BOWYER *sits in* WINWOOD'S *place at table, and dices.*

WINWOOD: You called me, sir?

STRICKLAND: I did not call, but I was thinking of you. Sit you down.

[WINWOOD *sits on a stool at the opposite side of the hearth, and cleans and fills his pipe.*

STRICKLAND: I watched you to-day, Tom. You bore yourself fairly in the fight. I was blithe to see it.

WINWOOD: God willing, you'll see better in the next fight, sir.

STRICKLAND: Go to! You did all that might be asked of a youth for the first time under fire.

WINWOOD: Ay, but 'twas my second time under fire, sir.

STRICKLAND: Second time? How's that, my boy?

WINWOOD: Last June, faith, I was at Bletchingley when we held the house four hours against the rebels, my schoolfellow Lord Bletchingley, and I, and the servants. I came by a nick in the arm there. I still have the scar to show.

[*Rises eagerly, and puts back his sleeve to show the scar.*

STRICKLAND [*lightly*]: 'Twas right unfriendly of you, Tom, to keep me so in the dark touching your exploits.

WINWOOD [*half embarrassed with the sense of having*

said too much, turns from STRICKLAND *and lights his pipe with the candle that he takes from the chimney-piece*] : Truth, sir, I was shamed to speak to you of Bletchingley.

STRICKLAND : Shamed ? What do you talk of ?

WINWOOD : Why, our fight at Bletchingley ; it must seem mere child's play unto you, a tried soldier, my father's old comrade.

[*He speaks the word "father" with all the proper pride that a son should show.*

STRICKLAND : But your mother. She would have been proud to know that you had borne you well in the fight. You should have told her, Tom.

WINWOOD [*in swift alarm*] : Told my mother ? Why sir, she—would have been troubled. Perchance she would not have heard of my going out for the King with you, because of Bletchingley.

STRICKLAND : Why because of Bletchingley ?

WINWOOD : Why ? Well, you see, sir—sure, 'twas there I had this wound.

[*Re-seats himself on the stool opposite* STRICKLAND.

STRICKLAND : And for that you think she would have kept you from the field ? Lad, you do not altogether know your mother.

[BOWYER, *at the end of a talk in dumb show with* GORING *and* HOPTON, *has risen, and now goes out at the single door, wide and heavy, that leads from the chamber centre back to the outer corridor. At the sound of the closing of the door* STRICKLAND *starts.*

STRICKLAND : What was that ?

GORING [*rises and salutes*] : 'Twas Captain Bowyer, sir, went into the outer room to speak with the sentries. [*Re-seats himself.*

HOPTON : Heaven send he get them to talk ! I'd fain know what's to become of us.

GORING [*stretching himself*] : Go sleep, like a wise man, and cease your fretting.

[*He presently rests his head on his folded arms, which he places on the table, and goes to sleep.*

STRICKLAND: Sound advice, Tom! You were best take it.

WINWOOD [*smoking throughout*]: Sleep? How can I, sir? I would it were day. I hate this odd and even time o' night. What think you will come of us?

STRICKLAND: What matters it, boy? We have fought our fight, and you bore yourself gallantly, Tom.

WINWOOD: Easy to do, sir, in the daylight, with your comrades about you, but this—this waiting in the dark! God! I would it were day. At two in the morning I've no more courage than——

STRICKLAND [*in sharp terror*]: Tom! Hold your peace!

[BOWYER *comes again into the room.* HOPTON *springs eagerly to his feet.*

HOPTON: What news, Captain?

BOWYER: Bad. They're quitting the village this same hour.

GORING: A retreat by night?

[*Rises and confers in dumb show with* HOPTON.

BOWYER: Your wound cannot endure this hasty moving, Will. In mere humanity they must let you rest here at the inn. You'll give them your parole.

STRICKLAND: You'll talk to your captors of paroles, after so many paroles have been broken by men that are a shame unto our party?

BOWYER: But you are known for a man of honour. And by happy chance the colonel in command of these rebels has come hither within the hour. He will listen to me. I knew him of old—one John Drummond.

WINWOOD: Drummond!

[*His hand clenches convulsively upon his pipe, which snaps sharply under the pressure.*

COLONEL DRUMMOND *enters the room. He is a grave, stern gentleman of middle age, in military dress, with cuirass, and sword at side.* WINWOOD, *at his entrance, shifts his position so that his back is towards him, and sits thus, with head bent and hands tight clenched.*

BOWYER : In good time, Colonel Drummond !

DRUMMOND [*throughout with the fine dignity of a soldier and a gentleman*] : I fear not, Captain. There are three of you here in presence with whom I must have a word. [*Seats himself at table.*] Lieutenant Goring !

GORING [*with some swagger*] : Well, sir ?

DRUMMOND : At Raglan Castle you gave your promise never again to bear arms against the Parliament. Now that you are taken with arms in your hands, have you aught to say in your defence ?

GORING : Before I gave that promise to your damned usurping Parliament, I swore to serve the King. I keep the earlier oath.

DRUMMOND : And for that you will answer in this hour. Now you, Mr. Hopton ?

BOWYER : Frank Hopton, too ?

DRUMMOND : What defence is yours for your breach of parole ?

HOPTON : It was forced from me. A forced promise, faith, 'tis void in the courts of law.

DRUMMOND : It may well be, but not in a court of war.

STRICKLAND : George ! Did he say there were—three had broken faith ?

DRUMMOND : And now for you, Thomas Winwood !

[WINWOOD *starts to his feet but does not face* DRUMMOND.

BOWYER : Tom, not you !

DRUMMOND : Last June, at Bletchingley, you, sir, gave to me personally your word of honour never again to take up arms——

STRICKLAND [*rising for the moment as if unwounded, with all his strength*] : Face that scoundrel ! Face him and tell him that he lies !

WINWOOD [*unwillingly turns and faces* DRUMMOND, *but stammers when he tries to speak*] : I—I——

STRICKLAND : Speak out !

DRUMMOND : Well, Mr. Winwood ?

STRICKLAND : Answer ! The truth ! The truth ! Have you broken your parole ?

WINWOOD [*desperately at bay, with his back to the wall, his comely young face for the moment the face of his coward and trickster father*] : God's death ! I've done no more than a hundred others have done. They've not kept faith with us, the cursed rebels. Why the fiend's name should we keep faith with them ? It was a forced promise. And the King—I was fain to serve him, as my father served him, like my father——

STRICKLAND : Like your father ! [*He staggers where he stands, a wounded man, a sick man—mortally sick at heart.*] Allison's lad !

BOWYER [*catching* STRICKLAND *as he staggers*] : Will !

STRICKLAND [*masters himself and stands erect*] : Let be ! Colonel Drummond, I ask your pardon for my words a moment since. I could not believe—I could not believe—— [*He sinks upon his chair.*] He is his father's son, George ! His father's son.

DRUMMOND : Come here, Winwood !

[*Heavily* WINWOOD *goes across the room and halts by the table, but throughout he keeps his dazed and miserable eyes on* STRICKLAND.

DRUMMOND : You realize well, the three of you, that by the breaking of your paroles you have forfeited your lives unto the Parliament.

HOPTON : Our lives ? You've no warrant——

DRUMMOND [*laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword*] : I have good warrant—here. I was minded first to stand the three of you against the wall in the court

below and have you shot in the presence of your misguided followers.

BOWYER : Colonel Drummond, I do protest !

DRUMMOND : You waste your words, sir. This hour I purpose to give a lesson to all the promise-breakers of your party.

GORING : You purpose, then, to butcher us, all three ?

DRUMMOND : Your pardon ! Two of you I shall admit to mercy. The third——

HOPTON : Well ! Which of us is to be the third ?

DRUMMOND : You may choose by lot which one of you shall suffer. You have dice here. Throw, and he who throws the lowest——

HOPTON [*with a burst of half hysterical laughter*] : Heaven's light, Rob, for once ye'll have enough of casting the dice !

DRUMMOND : Winwood, you are the youngest. You shall throw first. Winwood !

[WINWOOD *stands as if dazed, his eyes still on* STRICKLAND.

GORING : Are you gone deaf, Tom Winwood ?

WINWOOD [*thrusts out a groping hand*] : I—I—— Give me the dice !

HOPTON [*putting the dice-box into* WINWOOD'S *hand*] : Here ! Be quick !

[*A moment's pause, while* WINWOOD *with twitching face, shakes the box and shakes again.*

GORING : For God's love, throw !

WINWOOD [*throws, uncovers dice, and averts his eyes*] : What is it ?

DRUMMOND : Seven is your cast. You, Hopton !

[*Feverishly* HOPTON *snatches the box, shakes, and casts quickly.*

DRUMMOND : Eleven !

HOPTON [*almost hysterically*] : God be thanked for good luck ! God be thanked !

GORING : Damn you ! Hold your tongue !

[HOPTON *snatches a cup from the table and drinks*

thirstily. GORING *throws, and holds dice for a moment covered.*

GORING : It's between us now, Tom !

WINWOOD [*wiping his forehead with his sleeve*] : Yes.

[GORING *uncovers the dice.*

DRUMMOND : Eight !

GORING [*with a long breath of relief*] : Ah !

DRUMMOND [*rising*] : The lot has fallen upon you, Mr. Winwood.

WINWOOD : I am—at your disposal, sir.

DRUMMOND : You have ten minutes in which to make you ready.

GORING : Ten minutes !

[WINWOOD *sinks heavily into his old seat at table. Presently he draws to him the dice and box, and mechanically throws again and again.*

BOWYER [*intercepting* DRUMMOND *as he turns to leave the room*] : You shall listen to me, Drummond. The boy's my kinsman. He——

DRUMMOND : Stand aside, George Bowyer !

[*He goes out of the room.*

BOWYER [*following* DRUMMOND *out*] : Yet you shall listen ! Drummond ! Listen to me !

HOPTON : But 'tis mere murder. 'Tis against all law.

GORING : Will you prattle of law to Cromwell's men ? [*Comes to table and lays a hand on* WINWOOD'S *shoulder.*] Tom, lad, I would we could help you.

WINWOOD : I've thrown the double six—twice. 'Tis monstrous droll, eh, Rob ? Before—I could throw no higher than seven—no higher than seven !

[*His voice rises higher and higher, and breaks into a shrill laughter.*

GORING : Steady ! Steady, lad !

[STRICKLAND *looks up, as if rousing from a trance.*

HOPTON [*hastily fills a cup and offers it to* WINWOOD] : Here, Tom, drink this down.

WINWOOD [*snatches the cup and starts to drink, but in the act looks up and reads in his comrades' faces the*

fear that is on them, that he is about to disgrace the colours that he wears. He sets down the cup] : You —you think—— Will you leave me—for these minutes ? A' God's name, let me be !

[HOPTON *and* GORING *draw away to the window and stand watching* WINWOOD *anxiously. He has taken up the dice-box, and again is mechanically casting the dice.*

HOPTON : How will he bear himself yonder ?

GORING : You mean——

HOPTON : There in the courtyard when they——

GORING : Speak lower !

STRICKLAND [*rises with effort, crosses, and lays his hand on* WINWOOD'S *shoulder*] : Tom !

WINWOOD [*starting up, furiously*] : You're ashamed of me ! You're ashamed ! Don't pity me ! Let me be, curse you, let me be !

STRICKLAND [*sternly*] : Tom ! Look at me !

WINWOOD [*turns defiantly, meets* STRICKLAND'S *eyes, and desperately clings to them*] : I can't ! I can't ! If they'll wait till it's light—but now—in the dark —Make them wait till morning ! I can't bear it ! I can't bear it !

STRICKLAND : Be still ! You must face it, and face it gallantly.

WINWOOD [*stands erect, fighting hard for self-control*] : Gallantly. Yes. My father—he died for the King. I mustn't disgrace him. I must bear myself as he would have done. I——

STRICKLAND : Don't speak of him ! Think on your mother.

WINWOOD : Must you tell her—why they shot me ? She would think of it—of that broken promise—as a woman might. God's life ! Why will you judge me so ? My father would have understood.

STRICKLAND : Yes. He would have understood you well.

WINWOOD : What do you mean ? I'm a coward—a

promise-breaker. You think that. But my father —he died for the King. He—— [*In* STRICKLAND'S *face he reads that of which in all these years he has been kept in ignorance.*] How did my father die?

STRICKLAND: Not now, Tom!

[BOWYER *comes again into the room.*

WINWOOD [*almost beside himself*]: Answer me! Answer me! Bowyer! You're my cousin. Tell me the truth! As God sees us! How did my father die? How did my father live? You won't answer? You've lied! You've lied! All of you—all these years! He was a coward. You don't deny it! A coward—a false coward—and I'm his son! I'm his son.

[*Sinks upon a stool by the table, with face hidden, and breaks into rending sobs.*

BOWYER: Will! Will! You can bear no more.

STRICKLAND [*shakes off* BOWYER'S *arm and goes to* WINWOOD]: Stand up! Stand up! You are your mother's son as well as his!

WINWOOD [*rising blindly, as if* STRICKLAND'S *voice alone had power to lift him*]: A coward! You see. Like him. And there in the courtyard—— Ah, God! I'll break! I'll break.

STRICKLAND: You will not. For her sake—for her blood that is in you—Allison's lad!

WINWOOD [*with slow comprehension*]: You—loved her!

STRICKLAND: Yes. And love that part of her which is in you. And know you will bear you well unto the end.

WINWOOD: I'll—I'll—— It's not the death. It's not that. It's the moment—before the bullet—— God! If I fail—if I fail——

STRICKLAND: You will not fail.

WINWOOD: You believe that? You can believe that of me?

STRICKLAND: I believe that, Tom.

BOWYER: Will! The ten minutes are ended.

STRICKLAND: So soon! So soon!

BOWYER: Drummond will suffer me be with him to the last. Come, Tom, my lad!

[*Goes up, and from a chair beside the door takes a heavy military cloak—which shall thereafter serve as* WINWOOD'S *shroud. He holds it throughout so that* WINWOOD *may not mark it.*

WINWOOD [*takes his hat, and turns to* GORING *and* HOPTON, *with a pitiful effort at jauntiness*]: God be wi' you, boys! [*Crosses, and holds out his hand to* STRICKLAND.] Sir William! I'll—try. But—can't you help me? Can't you help me when . . .

[*Clings to* STRICKLAND'S *hand.*

STRICKLAND: I can help you. You shall bear you as becomes her son.

WINWOOD: Ay, sir.

STRICKLAND: And I shall know it. God keep you!

WINWOOD [*faces about*]: I am ready, sir. [*Goes to door, and on the threshold wheels and stands at salute.*] You shall have news of me, Sir William!

[WINWOOD *goes out, and* BOWYER, *with the cloak, follows after him.*

HOPTON: What did he mean?

GORING: He'll die bravely, poor lad, I'll swear to that! [STRICKLAND *sways slightly where he stands.*

GORING: Sir William! You're near to swooning. Sit you down, sir.

STRICKLAND: I pray you, gentlemen, for these moments do not disturb me.

[*He stands upon the hearth, erect, steady, and very still.*

HOPTON: Truth, the man's made of stone. I thought he had loved poor Winwood as his own son.

GORING: Quiet, will you? [*He removes his hat.*

HOPTON: What——

GORING: Think on what's happening in the court-yard, man!

[*A moment's pause, and then from below, in the rainy courtyard, is heard the report of a muffled volley.*

HOPTON: Hark!

STRICKLAND [*in an altered, remote voice*]: Well done!

GORING: Grant that he made a clean ending!

STRICKLAND [*turns slowly, with eyes fixed before him, and the sudden smile of one who greets a friend*]: Tom! Well done, Allison's lad!

[*He pitches forward.*

GORING [*catching* STRICKLAND *in his arms*]: Sir William! Help here, Frank!

[*They place* STRICKLAND *in his chair.* GORING *starts to loosen his neck gear.* HOPTON *kneels and lays his hand on* STRICKLAND'S *heart. On the moment* BOWYER *comes swiftly into the room.*

BOWYER: Will! Will! The lad died gallantly. He went as if a strong arm were round him.

HOPTON [*lets fall the hand that he had laid on* STRICKLAND'S *heart. Speaks in an awestruck voice*]: Perhaps there was!

GORING [*rises erect from bending over* STRICKLAND]: Captain! Sir William . . .

[BOWYER *catches the note in* GORING'S *voice, and removes his hat, as he stands looking upon what he now knows to be the dead body of his friend and leader.*

CURTAIN

SUMMER COMES TO THE DIAMOND O

By Robert Finch and Betty Smith

CHARACTERS

COOKY, *cook of the Diamond O Ranch*
CURLY, *a handsome young cowboy*
STUB, *a guitar-playing cowboy*
TEX, *a complaining cowboy*
GRANNY, *an old cowhand*
WINDY, *a stranger from over the Ruby Mountains*
SHERIFF LASH, *the law from Prairie County*
HOUSTON, *boss of the Diamond O*

THE PLACE is the cookshack of the Diamond O cattle ranch, in a valley of the Ruby Mountains in Montana
THE TIME is early evening in late October

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The music used in this play has been especially arranged by J. PHILIP SCHINHAN, and is here used with his kind consent. See also the Acting Notes, p. 252

SUMMER COMES TO THE DIAMOND O

The cookshack is an old log cabin. The weather-beaten logs are indifferently chinked with mud. Upstage over to L. *is a large crude table with a white oilcloth cover tacked on to it. There is a long bench behind the table and an upended apple box at either end. The cook's cot stands in the corner up* R. *It is spread with wrinkled horse-blankets, and everything eventually finds its way on to it. At present a guitar is lying on it. There is a small window above cot. Under window is a small wooden box which is nailed to the wall, and holds the cook's possessions: a Wild West magazine, an old pipe, some letters, a razor, pencil, and tablet of paper. His other shirt, a wild plaid one, hangs from a nail next to the box.*

In the C. *of* R. *wall is a door, leading outside. Another door, upstage in* L. *wall, leads to the kitchen. The opening is partially concealed by a ragged burlap curtain.*

At R. *below door, is a battered heating stove with a long length of black stovepipe. The stove is glowing and casts flickers of light about the room. Opposite, against* L. *wall, is a rickety wash bench holding a bucket of water, a tin dipper, and two tin wash-basins. Next to it hangs a grimy flour-sack towel. A broken old comb hangs on a string next to a cracked mirror.*

A lighted kerosene lamp with a dark tin shade hangs over the table. The room is in semi-darkness except for the pool of light on the table, the light cast by the stove and the warm glow of another lamp which gleams through the curtain of the kitchen door.

A saddle, bridles, and chaps hang from pegs driven into the walls. The polished leather catches the rays of the

lamplight. It is a Montana evening in late October. Through the little window the distant tops of the Ruby Mountains glow with a purple light in the nearly darkened sky.

The table is partially set for supper.

AT RISE, COOKY, *a short, grizzled fellow of indeterminate age, wearing a pair of dirty denim pants and a shirt, with a dirty flour sack tied about his waist, is finishing a mad dash across the room by tripping and sliding to door* R. *He stretches his arm outside the door, rises, and is seen clutching a long, raw, dust-sprinkled steak. He shakes his fist at the fleeing dog.*

COOKY: Danged old dog! [*He throws a cup out after the dog.*] Git out and stay out. [*He tries to spank the dust out of the steak. He gives up. He mumbles.*] Have to sprinkle extra pepper on it. Grit ain't goin' to be noticed then.

[*He throws it through door* L. *Then he steps outside door* R. *and beats vigorously on the dinner gong hanging outside. He crosses room and goes off* L. *A gentle, sad, monotonous singing rises above the clatter of dishes.*

Come and sit by my side if you love me,
Do not hasten to bid me adieu.

[*He returns singing with a handful of "silverware."*

But remember the Red River Valley,
And the cowboy that's waitin' for you.

[*He polishes a knife, fork, and spoon on his dirty apron and sets one place very carefully and repeats on the next place. Suddenly, realizing the futility of it all, he throws the whole batch on the table with a great clatter. He strides to door* R. *Yells.*

COME AND GIT IT BEFORE I THROW IT OUT!

CURLY [*in the distance*]: Comin-g-g-g-g! [COOKY *hurries off* L., *returning immediately with a huge platter of meat, a bowl of potatoes, and a pot of coffee. He has difficulty balancing these.*] Here I come, Cooky!

[*He rushes in, skims his hat on to the cot and proceeds to wash with great splutterings.*

COOKY: Hope that water's hot enough for that pretty face of yours, Curly.

CURLY: You're shore a good judge of horseflesh, Cooky. [STUB *enters from* R. *He carries a short branding iron which he places on the cot. He throws his hat and coat on the cot.*] Ain't he, Stub?

STUB: Shore.

CURLY: Let's have another towel. The dog's been sleepin' on this one.

COOKY [*arranging food on table*]: No clean towel till Saturday. [*Contemptuously, as* CURLY *dries his face gingerly.*] Dude!

[CURLY *takes basin to door* R., *opens it, and flings out the water.*

TEX [*just outside, howls*]: Yo-o-o-oow! [*They stare at each other in consternation. The door is kicked wide open and* TEX *enters holding his dripping hat at arm's length.*] What are you coyotes tryin' to do? Drown me? [*He throws his wet hat on the cot.*

CURLY [*slicking down his hair with the broken comb*]: Don't get ornery, Tex. Your face is all washed now. All you got to do is dry it.

[TEX *shares the towel with* STUB.

STUB [*glancing at table*]: Fried cow for supper again. We been eatin' on that steer six weeks now. We ought to be right down to his backbone.

TEX [*as the three sit at table*]: Boiled potatoes again! Fried beef and boiled potatoes three times a day for six weeks. [*They push their plates away.*

COOKY [*plaintively*]: I can't hardly choke it down myself. But that's all the Boss hands me to cook.

And—we got stewed prunes for dessert to-night . . . again.

TEX : Why don't we all quit ?

STUB : Where'd we go ? Winter's comin' on. Most ranches are layin' off their cowpunchers now.

COOKY : Boss is lookin' for a chance to lay off you fellers, too.

CURLY : Goin' to be a hard winter. The coyotes look lean and hungry. The deer left the ranges long ago. *They* know.

STUB : I don't like winter. Snow and cold and nothin' to do but think.

[*Sad and thoughtful, they start to eat perfunctorily.*

GRANNY [*a grizzled, weather-worn cowhand of forty, comes in lugging a saddle which he throws on to cot, adding his hat and coat. By now the cot is well piled up*] : You fellers think I got lost ? Was you cryin' ?

TEX : We was goin' to flip a coin for your prunes. If we had a coin.

GRANNY [*sits at the table without bothering to wash*] : I aim to eat everythin' in sight. No matter how bad it tastes. [COOKY *gives him a withering look and goes into the kitchen.*] Ridin' fences shore gives a man a real appetite.

TEX [*takes a drink of coffee, sputters, and spews it out*] : Phooey ! Chicory in it again so's the Boss can save on coffee.

STUB : I wish it was summer again. I like ridin' in the sun and sleepin' out nights under the sky.

GRANNY [*shivers and pulls up his coat collar*] : Mighty cold in here. Boss should have chinked up the logs against the winter.

COOKY [*enters with a plate of biscuits and a bowl of prunes which he passes around as he talks*] : Boss ain't goin' to buy you no stove for your bunkhouse. He says you're a bunch of dudes wantin' a stove and dessert with your meals and all them frills and high-falutin' fandangles.

STUB : Ain't nothin' wrong with wantin' somethin' fancy now and then.

COOKY : Well, I'll put paper pants on the next batch of pork chops.

GRANNY [*dreamily*] : You might not believe it to look at me, but I knew a gal once that baked angel food cakes with big gobs of whipped cream drippin' off 'em. Her name was Genevieve. [*Looks at his spoonful of prunes.*] Doggone it, I should have married her.

CURLY [*leaps up yelling. He takes something from his mouth, throws the biscuit down, and stamps on it*] : That done settles it ! That biscuit broke off the finest gold tooth I ever had !

[*He holds the tooth between his fingers and examines it ruefully.*

COOKY : I couldn't help it. We're fresh out of bakin' powder and there wasn't hardly no lard for shortenin'.

CURLY [*dramatically*] : I'm leavin' !

GRANNY [*as everyone looks up startled*] : Where you headin' for ?

CURLY : Anywheres but here. I'll draw my pay and light out. We got two months' back pay comin' and eighty dollars will take me a long way.

GRANNY : If you leave without a warnin', the Boss don't have to pay you off. It's different if he fires you, though.

CURLY : Could ask for my pay first and *then* leave.

[*The door opens quietly. Unobserved by the* COWBOYS, MR. HOUSTON, *the Boss, stands in the doorway.*

TEX : I'll go with you. Shore would teach the Boss a lesson. [CURLY *turns and sees the Boss. Frantically he signals* TEX. TEX *pays no heed. The other* COWBOYS *turn and see the Boss. All try to warn* TEX. *But* TEX, *his back to the door, talks loudly and belligerently.*] The old rattlesnake is making our life miserable so's we'll pull out before our time's up

and he won't have to pay us. Say! Next time I see him, I'll spit right in his eye. I'll shore tell him where to head in at. [*Noticing the tension, he turns slowly and sees the Boss. His tone changes suddenly to one of polite greeting.*] Why, howdy, Boss. Come right on in.

HOUSTON [*coming into the room*]: You're fired! And the rest of you can go with him.

CURLY: How about the back pay you owe us?

HOUSTON: Well . . . I'll mail it to you. Send me your address when you get located.

GRANNY [*evenly*]: Might take you some time to get round to it. No. We better stay on for a spell.

HOUSTON: I can't pay you off till I sell them steers. [COWBOYS *exchange doubtful looks.*] Don't you believe me? [*They stare at him.*

STUB: Shore wish you could pay us, Boss.

HOUSTON [*after a moment's hesitation*]: I didn't come over here to argue. I'm fair and square with my cowhands. Always was. [*Takes a billfold from his pocket. The* COWBOYS *look hopeful.*] Tell you what I'll do. I'll give you ten dollars apiece out of what you got comin'. Use it for travelin' if you want to leave the Diamond O. Or you can buy you a bunch of stoves and canned peaches and lace curtains so's you'll be satisfied here. [*As he gives each one a bill.*] You'll get the rest when I sell them steers. [*Replacing his billfold and going to the door.*] And not a day sooner. I hope you all quit! I'll be glad to get you off my place. Lazy complainin' dudes!

[*He goes out, slamming the door.*

CURLY: Ten measly dollars! Well, it's enough to get me out of here anyways.

STUB: Where you goin'?

CURLY: I'm goin' to throw a saddle on old Buck and head him south and keep ridin'. Ridin' along steady, cookin' my own grub and campin' out nights. [*Dreamily.*] And then a day'll come when it's fine

and warm and I'll ask the first stranger I see, "Where'bouts am I, pardner?" And he'll say, "Californy, cowboy."

GRANNY: It ain't that easy. You can travel for weeks and spend all of that ten dollars and still be in Montana. Montana's a mighty big spread.

STUB: Ain't got nothin' 'gainst the Diamond O . . . in summer. But in winter . . . [*He shudders.*

TEX: Nothin' to do but see that a herd of white-faced cattle get through the winter.

STUB [*rummages under all the stuff on the cot and pulls out his guitar*]: Anyways, I got my music.

[*He sits on cot, tunes up, and tries out a few chords.*

CURLY [*clasping hands behind his head. Dreamily*]: Next to Californy, I'd like to find one of them places where the ranch is owned by a pretty young gal. Cowpuncher rides by and she gives him a job. And she needs him to help her 'cause her foreman is rustlin' her cattle. [*In his enthusiasm, he gets himself identified as the noble cowboy.*] And I show him up and save the cattle and the gal makes me foreman and ups and marries me and I get to own the ranch. All in ninety days' time. Just imagine it.

TEX [*interested*]: Where does all this happen?

CURLY: I don't know. [*Takes magazine from box over the cot.*] I read about it in here: "Tender Wild West Romances."

STUB: Must be mighty pretty country round there.

GRANNY: You danged idiot, they're writin' about out here!

CURLY [*astonished*]: Who'd ever believe that!

TEX: Must be somewheres the other side of the Ruby Mountains. Never heard of such doin's hereabouts.

STUB [*striking a louder chord*]: Say, fellers, I can play it! That tune we heard over in Elkhorn last summer.

[*Strikes another chord and sings in a sad tenor voice.*

I'm a poor, lonesome cowboy,
I'm a poor, lonesome cowboy,
I'm a poor, lonesome cowboy,
And a long ways from home.

[*He pauses and chords. In the distance is heard the dismal wail of a coyote.*

TEX: Quit it! You're makin' some poor coyote lonesome, too.

STUB:

I ain't got no sweetheart,
I ain't got no sweetheart,
I ain't got no sweetheart,
To sit and talk with me.

CURLY [*over the singing*]: They might maybe make me eat Cooky's grub, but you bet nobody can make me listen to that. [*Goes to door* R. *followed by* TEX.

STUB:

I'm a poor lonesome cowboy,
I'm a poor lonesome cowboy.

[CURLY, *opening door, steps back as he sees a* STRANGER *framed in the doorway. He is a gaudily dressed young cowboy. He wears shining white chaps, a fine white sombrero with a snakeskin band, doeskin gloves, and an embroidered doeskin vest; white silk shirt, sky-blue neckerchief, and highly ornamented boots. The boys stare as he steps in.* STUB'S *song trails off.*

STRANGER: Don't stop. Keep a-playin'.

STUB [*startled*]: Huh?

STRANGER: Where'd you get that there guitar? [*He smiles—a bright smile filled with happiness, enthusiasm, and friendliness. The* COWBOYS *continue to stare at this resplendent figure.*] I shore admire that instrument. Shore has a wonderful tone. [*He stares admiringly at the guitar.*] Must 'a' cost a small fortune.

STUB [*embarrassed, but greatly pleased*] : Naw. I give a feller two dollars for it. Said he got it from Sears Roebuck.

STRANGER : He must have been loco, shore enough. [*Runs his finger over the grain of the wood.*] Look at the shine she's got.

GRANNY : Cheap shellac and you know it.

STRANGER : Oh, no! It's patina . . . a shine that comes on fine old things. Like them guitars they have in old Spain. [STUB *tries a chord. The* STRANGER *sighs in ecstasy.*] Listen at that! [*Another chord or two.*] Ain't it beautiful?

CURLY [*surprised*] : 'Tain't bad at that.

GRANNY : He's just playin' it more careful-like.

STUB : Set down, Stranger. [*Looks at the* STRANGER'S *fine clothes and then wipes the box off with his sleeve.*] But don't get them pants dirty.

STRANGER [*as he sits*] : Don't care even if I do. Got eight more pairs just like 'em.

COOKY : If you're aimin' to borrow money, we ain't got none.

STRANGER : That food shore looks good.

GRANNY : Don't let 'im work on you, Cooky.

[*Suspiciously,* COOKY *moves the platter away from the* STRANGER.

STRANGER [*seeming not to hear*] : Say! Don't tell me these are real old-fashioned bakin' powder biscuits? [*Picks one up and examines it.*] They are! Just like they make down in old New England. Didn't think anybody in Montana knew the secret of makin' them. [*He samples one. Looks pleased.*] They're wonderful! Nice and firm. Not mushy like some.

TEX [*takes one and bites into it with an effort*] : They shore ain't mushy. *I* can tell you that.

[*But the* STRANGER'S *manner is so infectious that when he smiles delightedly at* TEX, TEX *smiles back. They all try the biscuits, even* COOKY.

COOKY: I'll be dog-goned! They *are* good! [*Hurriedly pouring a cup of coffee.*] Try this coffee.

STRANGER [*drinks. Looks pleased. Takes another drink*]: You fellers don't get coffee like this every day, do you?

CURLY: No! Some days it's even worse.

STRANGER: It has that rich dark taste like the coffee I used to get when I was livin' on a plantation down in old Virginia.

GRANNY [*dryly*]: I bet.

COOKY: Have a piece of meat.

STRANGER [*in awe*]: Do you fellers have meat every day?

TEX: Three times.

STRANGER: Gosh! [*He eats a piece, chewing thoughtfully. Then he turns to them.*] Last time I et steak like that——

GRANNY [*breaking in cynically*]: We know. In a swell hotel in Chicago.

STRANGER: No. It was at the Ritz Waldorf in New York City. Cost me fifteen dollars and wasn't half as good as this.

COOKY [*pleased*]: Are you fellers listenin'?

STRANGER: You shore are lucky havin' a cook like him.

STUB: He ain't so bad, I guess.

COOKY [*carried away*]: I got a dab of cake out in the kitchen.

CURLY [*suspiciously*]: Cake? And you handed *us* prunes?

COOKY [*furtively*]: I was savin' it for a Christmas surprise. But set down, boys, there's enough for all.

[*He goes out into the kitchen.*

[GRANNY *sits on the cot. The others sit around the table.*

TEX: Stranger, I reckon you can lie as fast as a cowboy can rope a steer. But I don't hold it against you if it makes Cooky loosen up.

CURLY : Ain't no harm in his braggin'. Makes the time pass.

STRANGER [*puzzled*] : Lyin' ? Braggin' ? *Who ?*

STUB [*with an angry look at the others, he changes the topic*] : Where you from, Stranger ?

GRANNY : Yeah. *That's* what we'd like to know.

STRANGER : Oh, I'm from all over. Just now I'm fixed up good on the Ruby River. Got a nice little spread over there.

COOKY [*enters with a plate of sliced cake which he passes around*] : This is on me.

STRANGER [*as they eat*] : Eatin' where he cooks is just like a party.

CURLY : How do you like it over on the Ruby . . . where you *said* you come from ?

STRANGER : Fine ! Fine ! But I like it better down in Mexico. *Old* Mexico ! This feller's guitar reminded me.

COOKY : He's Stub and this here's Curly and Tex and that's Granny over there.

STRANGER : I'm mighty proud to meet up with you all.

STUB : Is it nice and warm down there ? [*A little bashfully.*] In old Mexico ?

STRANGER : It's always warm there. Even in winter. It's downright beautiful !

GRANNY [*sarcastically*] : I better see the door's shut good. You might ketch cold bein' so used to them warm climates. [*He goes to the door which is open a crack. He pulls it wide open in order to slam it. Something catches his eye.*] Well, string me up for a rustler ! Whose horse is that ? [TEX, CURLY, *and* STUB *rush to the door.*] Biggest black horse I ever did see.

STUB : Them stirrups and that fancy bridle shine like silver.

CURLY : That saddle-horse yours, Stranger ?

STRANGER : Shore is. He comes clear from old Araby. Ever been there ?

TEX : Nope. We don't get around much.

CURLY : I don't know much about you, Stranger, but any man ownin' a horse like that *must* be all right.

[GRANNY *closes the door. The* COWBOYS *drift back to the table.*

STRANGER : I'm pretty fond of him. Old Charlemagne, I call him. After that king . . . a long time ago. Mighty brave *hombre.*

STUB [*admiringly*] : You must have got a good schoolin' knowin' such things.

STRANGER : No, it's just that I done a lot of travellin'.

GRANNY [*dryly*] : I can just imagine.

CURLY : Granny, why don't you just set a while and think of the gal who used to bake them pies, and leave us alone ?

COOKY : He must have been all over. That's why he knows good cookin'.

STUB : Yeah. [*To* STRANGER.] What was you sayin' ?

STRANGER : I was thinkin' of Charlemagne. Mighty sorry to leave him behind again.

TEX : What do you mean leave him behind ?

STRANGER : Oh, I got to get back to old Mexico where it's warm. You fellers would like it. Sun always shinin'. Lots of good trout fishin'. All the land you want for the askin'. And them *señoritas* !

CURLY [*smoothing down his hair*] : Are they pretty like they say ?

STRANGER : They're so beautiful you can't imagine it. [*Tolerantly.*] 'Course, the ladies are pretty in old Argentine, too. And they shore admire us *gauchos.*

TEX and CURLY : Us *what ?*

STRANGER : Up here, we're cowboys, but down there we're *gauchos.*

CURLY [*thrilled*] : That's somethin' fine to know all right.

GRANNY : What ranch do you ride for down in . . . [*sneeringly*] old Mexico ? [*Holds up his hand as the*

STRANGER *is about to answer.*] Don't tell me! I know! The biggest one in the world!

STRANGER [*pleasantly*]: Oh, I don't ride for nobody. Don't have to. I got me a little gold mine down there. All I do is hire a feller to shovel the gold out for me. He's down there now. He sends me the money once a month.

TEX [*laughs loudly*]: You shore overplayed your hand that time, pardner. We know *that* cain't be true.

CURLY: I ain't so shore of that, Tex. A lot of things go on in this world that a feller never knows about.

STUB: That must be some country down there. I'd admire to see it.

CURLY: Me too.

STRANGER: Ain't no law to stop you. [*The* COWBOYS *exchange startled glances at the idea of their ever going to such a wonderful place. The* STRANGER *continues dreamily.*] Summer all year round. Great big flowers; red and blue and yeller ones big around as your hat. Pretty as anythin'. Everybody plays the guitar and all the fellers have to dress up in velvet pants with silver buttons on 'em.

GRANNY [*sarcastically*]: Ain't it a pity you got to throw away that fine outfit you're wearin'?

STRANGER [*sincerely*]: Yeah. But you can have it seein' you admire it so much.

GRANNY [*embarrassed at this generosity*]: Aw, now . . .

STRANGER [*inspired*]: Say! Why don't you fellers pack your duds and come along with me? I got a car big enough for all of us.

STUB [*eagerly*]: I could pay ten dollars toward gas and oil.

STRANGER [*grandly*]: Your money's no good. I got enough for all of us.

TEX: It sounds fine. But you know things ain't that easy that we could just up and rip off to Mexico.

STRANGER: Why not? It's all in the way you look at it. You stay on this here ranch because you

don't know *how* to do anythin' else. Well, it's mighty simple. You just make up your mind you want to go to old Mexico with me and to-morrow mornin' I'll drive by and you just step in my car and that's all there is to it. Nothin' hard about *that*.

TEX: I can't believe it'd be so easy.

STRANGER: I do it all the time. Go here, go there . . . anywheres.

CURLY [*suddenly*]: I'll go with you to-morrow.

STUB: I'm all set.

COOKY: Could you, maybe, use a cook down in old Mexico?

STRANGER: Shore could.

TEX: Stranger, I ain't believin' a word you say. But if you got a car and if you come around to-morrow mornin', I'll go along with you . . . for the ride.

STRANGER: Good! I'll come and get you.

GRANNY [*bursting out irritably*]: You fellers gone plumb loco? A stranger comes along and does a lot of fancy talkin' and you're all willin' to give up a good job and string along with him.

TEX [*incredulously*]: A *good* job?

GRANNY: Well, it's a place to stay and you got somethin' to eat anyways. And you all want to light out to Mexico with him . . . give up what little you got for somethin' that might never be.

STRANGER [*admiringly*]: You fellers shore are lucky havin' a fine feller like him around.

CURLY: You mean him, *Granny*?

STRANGER: Yeah. Everythin' he said is right and you fellers should listen to him.

TEX: But you been tellin' us . . .

STRANGER: Once I was like you fellers; I had a good job and everythin'. But I got this restless feelin' and set off. Now if I'd o' had a sensible friend like him, I might o' kept on workin' and by now owned

all the ranches in Prairie County and been a big boss instead of just a wanderin' feller. [*Holding out his hand.*] Shake, Granny. You shore got fine sense. [*They shake hands.* GRANNY *is flattered.*

STUB: But . . . but . . . that gold mine . . .

TEX: And them *señoritas*?

STRANGER: Shore! Shore! They're wonderful! But nothin' ain't as wonderful as havin' a friend like him . . . [*puts his hand on* GRANNY'S *shoulder*] who's watchin' out for your best interests.

GRANNY [*very flattered*]: Now, Stranger, I ain't sayin' that you're wrong. I'm only sayin' the boys better go a little slow about pullin' up stakes. As for myself . . . [*He beams.*] Well, Stranger, I guess you can count me in on that trip.

[*They shake hands again. Everybody is happy.*

TEX: I'm goin', but I don't expect we'll ever hit Mexico or any of them places.

STUB: Shore we will. And I'm all set. I know how to play the guitar already. You fellers would have to learn.

STRANGER: Say! What are we all sittin' here so quiet for when we could have music? [*Clapping* STUB *on the back.*] Give us a tune, Stub.

STUB [*as he starts to chord*]: Aw, the fellers are tired of the one song I know.

STRANGER [*as* STUB *chords*]: I know one! Heard it down in Wyoming time I was bringin' cattle up to Montana. Let's see . . .

[*Hums, taps his foot until* STUB *catches the rhythm in his chording. Then he sings out in a clear joyous voice.*

With my foot in the stirrup and my hand on my thigh,
I'm the best dang cowboy that ever rode by.

THE OTHER COWBOYS:

Coma ti yi yippi, yippi yi yippi yay!
Coma ti yi yippi yippi yay."

STRANGER :

My seat's in the saddle and my rope's on the side,
Show me a horse that I can't ride.

THE OTHER COWBOYS :

Coma ti yi yippi, yippi yi yippi yay !
Coma ti yi yippi yippi yay.

STRANGER :

On a ten-dollar horse and a forty-dollar saddle,
I'm the best dang cowboy ever punched cattle.

THE OTHER COWBOYS :

Coma ti yi yippi, yippi yi yippi yay !
Coma ti yi yippi yippi yay.

STRANGER :

I went up to the Boss and we had a little chat,
I slapped him in the face with my Stetson hat.

[*The* COWBOYS *laugh so much at this verse, which strikes home, that* GRANNY *and* COOKY *carry the next chorus alone.* GRANNY *sings loud and waveringly and* COOKY *loud and off-key.*

COOKY and GRANNY :

Coma ti yi yippi, yippi yi yippi yay !
Coma ti yi yippi yippi yay.

STRANGER [*slowing down to a sad rhythm*] :

With my knees in the saddle and my seat towards the sky,
I'll quit punchin' cattle in the sweet by and by.

THE OTHER COWBOYS :

Coma ti yi yippi, yippi yi yippi yay !
Coma ti yi . . .

[*There is a loud pounding on the door soon after the chorus begins. The singing dies away.*

COOKY : Come in !

[SHERIFF LASH *steps into the room. He leans against the door.*

LASH : Howdy, Windy ! [*Consternation !*

CURLY [*horrified*] : Windy !

[*The* COWBOYS *stare at each other as the full meaning of the nickname sinks in.*

LASH : Havin' yourself a time, Windy ?

WINDY [*no longer the* STRANGER] : Why, howdy, Mr. Lash. Yeah ! Havin' a fine time. Meet the boys. Fellers, this is Sheriff Lash.

LASH : Proud to meet you all. [*They merely stare at him.*] Well, Windy, 'bout time we was gettin' back, ain't it ?

WINDY [*getting his hat off the cot*] : Shore is. [*Beaming.*] Say, it'll be wonderful ridin' back with the wind blowin' and the moon shinin' like it does over the old Caribbees.

[*He is just as friendly with* LASH *as he is with the others.*

LASH : That's right. You lope on ahead. I'll catch up with you.

WINDY [*putting his hat on*] : Yeah. [*At the door, he waves gaily.*] So long, fellers.

STUB : Hey ! What about Mexico ?

WINDY : *Old* Mexico ?

STUB : Yeah !

WINDY [*dreamily*] : It's a mighty fine country.

[*He goes, closing the door after him. The* COWBOYS *stare at the closed door dumbly.* STUB *goes to the cot, sweeps the stuff which is on it on to the floor, and throws himself on the cot with his face to the wall.*

TEX [*goes to door, opens it and looks off after the retreating horse and rider. He speaks softly*] : Charley-Mane ! After a king in olden times.

[*He stares a second longer and then slams the door angrily.*

GRANNY [*righteously*] : I told you and I told you !

COWBOYS [*together, angrily*] : Shut up !

LASH : I hope Windy ain't caused you no trouble ?

COOKY : No trouble a-tall.

CURLY : We was talkin' about goin' to Mexico with him.

LASH : Poor old Windy !

CURLY : I don't like the way you talk about him. [*But he backs away with an eye on* LASH'S *pistol holster.*] Sheriff or no sheriff.

LASH : Don't get on your high horse, son. I like to hear Windy talk too. I like it fine. Everybody does. But it's just talk.

GRANNY : I tried to tell you he's never been to any of them places.

LASH : He's a awful convincin' talker and he's nice to have around. But he ain't never been out of Montana. In fact, he ain't never been out of Prairie County. [*Judiciously.*] But it's a mighty big county. Pretty near as big as . . . [*shyly*] Old Spain.

GRANNY : How come we ain't never heard of this feller ? Is Prairie County far away ?

LASH : Way the other side of the Rubies. Three-day ride from here. That's if you know where the pass is. Otherwise, it's a week's ride. Had a lot of trouble trailin' Windy. He shore does get around. [*Pause.*] From county to county.

GRANNY : How come ?

LASH : It all started a few years back when Windy fell off his horse on to his head. [*They exchange understanding looks while* LASH *talks.* STUB *sits up on the cot.*] Used to work for the Lazy K. Mr. Bland, the Boss, sort of felt at fault about the accident and took good care of Windy . . . bought him the kind of fancy clothes he likes and all. But Windy always kept goin' away.

STUB. Seein' you're the law, is Windy in trouble ?

LASH : Yeah ! He swiped that big black horse he's ridin' and Mr. Bland had to turn him over to us. Mr. Bland likes Windy fine but . . . [*he takes off his hat and sighs*] Windy swiped this horse, name of Bud, from the Apex Ranch. He gives him a new name, Charley-Mane. Danged if the horse don't like it. He won't go back no more to the Apex.

CURLY : Just sort of hangs around Windy, eh ?

LASH : So the feller wants a hundred dollars for the horse and Mr. Bland ain't goin' to pay it. So Windy's got to stay in jail. [*Preparing to leave.*] I should have watched Windy more careful-like. [*The* COWBOYS *sit silent.* LASH *looks at them sorrowfully, then turns to go as there seems nothing more to say.*] Well, so long, fellers.

[*They say nothing. He goes.*

CURLY [*angry and heartbroken*] : And it all seemed so *real* ! The gold and the *señoritas* and the velvet pants.

[*Angrily, he kicks the saddle which* STUB *has thrown on the floor.*

GRANNY : Hey ! Leave my saddle alone.

[*He tramps over the hats and coats on the floor to pick up the saddle.*

CURLY : What's the idea stampedin' all over my hat ?

[*He pulls the hat from under* GRANNY'S *feet.*

TEX [*pulling on his coat, on which* CURLY *is standing*] : Try usin' your own coat for a doormat.

[STUB *holds his guitar high over his head to protect it from the jostling* COWBOYS.

CURLY : We ought to take that two-dollar guitar and break it over his head. His playin' started all this.

[STUB, *his guitar over his head, runs behind table where* COOKY *is sitting, very much depressed.*

COOKY : If you fellers want to fight, do it in your own bunk-house. [*Standing up.*] I'm the one that's got a good mind to leave now. [*They quiet down as he talks. He continues mournfully.*] Windy was the only cowpuncher ever liked my cookin'.

GRANNY [*scornfully*] : You and that cake you was holdin' out on us ! For Christmas !

[COOKY *shrinks.*

TEX [*takes a drink of coffee. Spews it out*] : Worse than before.

CURLY [*tries a bite of biscuit*] : Harder than ever.

GRANNY [*shivers*] : It's cold in here. I wish Genevieve would write.

STUB : I wish summer would come.

TEX [*blazing out*] : I'm plumb sick of hearin' talk about summer-time and listenin' to that whiny music of yours.

STUB [*hurt*] : 'Course it's only a two-dollar guitar.

[*He tries a chord.*

TEX : If you play any more on it, I'll chop it up for firewood.

STUB : Nothin's any good. I'll bust it myself.

[*He takes it by the neck and is about to break it over his knee when* GRANNY *takes it from him.*

GRANNY : Take it easy, son. [*He puts guitar on cot.*

STUB : But while Windy was here the grub tasted good, the cookshack was warm and my guitar made fine music. He shore had a way of lookin' at things.

CURLY [*picking up the magazine*] : He's like the cowpunchers who ride for these magazine ranches.

TEX : Think of it ! That Bland feller could have him back if he just paid the hundred dollars for that Charley-Mane horse.

STUB [*sighs*] : I don't see how Mr. Bland could stand to leave Windy go.

[*A pause.* CURLY *starts walking up and down the room deep in thought. He starts banging his fist against his other hand as though an idea were coming to him.* TEX *and* STUB *follow him with their eyes.* COOKY *and* GRANNY *exchange puzzled head-shakes and then stare at* CURLY.

TEX : Well ?

CURLY : Shut up. I'm gettin' an idea.

TEX [*puzzled*] : But look. How we do know Lash was tellin' the truth ?

STUB : Windy *said* he was the Sheriff.

COOKY : And Windy don't lie ! [*The* COWBOYS *jump in surprise.*] Well . . . not *really* lie.

TEX [*vaguely disappointed*] : I guess he was a sheriff, all right. But gosh ! Seems like we got as much right to Windy as that feller has.

STUB : We did let him go mighty easy like.

CURLY : We should of put up an argument.

TEX : That's right.

COOKY [*very seriously*] : Fellers, it ain't . . . too late.

CURLY : For what ?

COOKY : To argue with the sheriff. Somebody's got to go and bring them back.

TEX : Maybe we could get Windy out on bail. Curly ! You go get 'em.

CURLY [*grabbing his hat*] : Boys, I'm on my way.

TEX [*warningly*] : And you better not come back without 'em.

STUB : Maybe we *all* ought to go.

GRANNY : Some of us ought to stay and fix the place up so's Windy will *want* to stay here.

CURLY [*opening door*] : I'll take the short cut through the corral and head 'em off.

GRANNY : They'll be ridin' slow on account of Windy enjoyin' the moon and all.

CURLY : Yeah ! [*He goes.*

GRANNY : Seems a little warmer in here already.

COOKY : I'm goin' to cook somethin' good. I got some cocoa . . . [*his eyes shift*] that . . . er . . . I forgot about. I'll make hot chocolate with it. [*At the kitchen door.*] And I'll make a puddin'. I got two cans of condensed milk . . . [*He ducks a biscuit thrown by* TEX.] Well, I was only savin' them in case somebody got sick.

[*He goes into the kitchen.*

TEX : You clear off them dishes, Granny. [*As* GRANNY *starts to do so.*] I'll sweep up a little. [*As he goes into the kitchen for the broom.*] And look at that there cot, Stub. It's a disgrace.

STUB : All right ! All right !

[*He begins to clean up that area, hanging up the*

coats, etc. and standing the branding iron in the corner.

COOKY : Say ! Maybe it won't be the same now that we know he ain't been to any of them places.

[GRANNY *pauses on his way to the kitchen with an armful of dishes.* TEX *holds the broom suspended.* STUB *pauses in the act of hanging the saddle on a peg. Finally,* STUB *speaks.*

STUB [*slowly*] : What a feller *makes up* is sometimes better than what *really is.*

[*He hangs up the saddle.*

COOKY [*in relief*] : Yeah !

[*He goes back into the kitchen. The others resume their work.*

TEX : Funny thing. When I thought it was all real and he was braggin' on it, I called him a liar. But now that I know he's a liar, it seems kind of true. I can't figure it out.

GRANNY : I don't care if a feller lies. Just so's he's sincere.

TEX : Yeah !

[*He sweeps harder, raising a great cloud of dust.*

HOUSTON [*comes in, slamming the door. He sidesteps a cloud of dust. The* COWBOYS *glance at him briefly and then ignore him. He stands with his hands on his hips and sniffs in the direction of the kitchen*] : What in time's goin' on here ?

TEX : Move your foot, Boss. I want to sweep here. [*Astonished,* HOUSTON *steps aside.* TEX *follows him up, sweeping*]. Boss, go stand over there in the corner out of the way.

[*Surprised,* HOUSTON *follows instructions.*

HOUSTON : Look, fellers. [*They pay no attention to him. They are concentrating on their tasks.*] Look here ! [*Mildly surprised, they look at him.*] I just come over to tell you boys that I'm goin' to have to borrow those ten-dollar bills back. I been goin' over the books and things look mighty dark.

TEX [*with finality*] : Like to help you out, Boss. But the money's all spoken for.

HOUSTON : You might's well let me have it. You ain't got nothin' to spend it on here.

STUB : We need it for bail money . . . for our company.

TEX : I hope the sheriff listens to reason.

GRANNY : If he don't, we can raise a rumpus and maybe he'll throw us all in jail 'longside of Windy.

STUB : Say ! Why didn't we think of that ?

HOUSTON [*angrily*] : Everybody shut up a minute. I'm the boss of the Diamond O and I got a right to know what's goin' on 'round here.

TEX [*calmly*] : All right, Boss.

HOUSTON : I'm sick of your complainin' all the time.

TEX. Won't be no more complainin' if our plans work out.

STUB (*shaking the cot blanket violently and speaking through the cloud of dust which comes from it.* HOUSTON *sneezes*] : We won't mind the grub and the cold no more. 'Cause we're goin' to have somethin' that'll make this place beautiful !

[TEX *puts aside his broom and helps* STUB *spread the blanket smoothly on the cleared cot.* HOUSTON *takes off his hat,* STUB *and* TEX *carry the cot down near the stove. It faces the audience,* HOUSTON *scratches his head in surprise.* GRANNY *places an upended apple box in front of the stove at right angles to the cot.*

HOUSTON : I think you've all went loco.

[*The door opens,* CURLY *stands there with* SHERIFF LASH. *The* COWBOYS *look startled.*

GRANNY : Where's Windy ?

LASH : He's waitin' for me down by Red Rock Creek. He's showin' Charley-Mane his head in the water by the light of the moon. And the danged horse is plumb crazy 'bout it.

TEX. Curly tell you our idea ?

LASH : Boys, I don't think it will work out.

GRANNY : Ain't no law against you rentin' him out to us.

HOUSTON : Who ?

LASH : You'd have to go over to Prairie County to bail him out. I ain't authorized to rent him.

HOUSTON : Where ? Who ? What did you say ?

LASH (*as though it explained all*] : We're talkin' about Windy. [*Back to the* COWBOYS.] Only way I can see is to pay the Apex the hundred dollars for the horse and buy Windy outright.

HOUSTON [*enlightened*] : A horse !

GRANNY [*slapping his thigh*] : Shore ! We'll buy him.

TEX : Why didn't we think of that before ? [*He slaps his ten-dollar bill on the table.*] Here's my money.

CURLY : And mine.

[*Throws it on the table.* STUB *adds his money.*

GRANNY : And mine.

HOUSTON : You mean *mine.*

TEX : But gosh ! That's only forty dollars.

LASH [*turning to the door*] : Too bad, boys.

STUB : Wait ! Mr. Houston . . .

[*But he loses his nerve.*

HOUSTON : Just what are you fellers buyin' with my money ?

LASH : He's a cowboy. Fell off a horse and he's a bit loco.

GRANNY : But Boss, he shore talks pretty.

HOUSTON [*violently throwing his hat on the floor*] : Well, I'll be roped, tied, and branded if that ain't the last straw ! Takin' in a loco cowpuncher to cheer you up ! [*Shouting.*] I won't have it.

CURLY : But Boss . . .

HOUSTON : If I catch him around here, I'll herd him off the ranch so fast, it'll make his head swim.

WINDY : Howdy, fellers !

[*He is standing in the kitchen door, eating a biscuit,* COOKY, *beaming, is just behind him.*

TEX : Windy !

[*The* COWBOYS *surround him and shake his hand violently . . . as if he had returned after a year's absence.*

WINDY [*pointing at* HOUSTON] : Who is that handsome lookin' feller ?

[HOUSTON *looks in back of him to see who* WINDY *is referring to.*

STUB [*delighted*] : Why, that's our Boss. [*He introduces* WINDY *as the important personage.*] Boss, meet up with Windy.

HOUSTON [*flabbergasted*] : Windy !

WINDY : You the feller who owns this great big beautiful ranch ?

HOUSTON : Well, yeah ! I own this place. Why ?

WINDY : Makes me kind of homesick for old Australia. Reminds me of the big rich ranches they have down there. Only this one is kept up better. [*He shakes* HOUSTON'S *hand in a very friendly way.*] Mighty proud to know you. [*To* COWBOYS.] Don't know what you fellers are thinkin' of, wantin' to go and leave a fine boss like him.

HOUSTON [*somewhat pleased*] : Oh, I guess there's somethin' to be said on both sides.

WINDY [*looking at him more closely*] : You remind me of an admiral I used to know. Big handsome feller. Boss of the biggest ship in the British navy.

HOUSTON [*simpers modestly*] : Is that so ?

GRANNY [*fervently*] : Boss, you ain't heard nothin' yet.

WINDY : This feller's name was Henry.

HOUSTON [*pleased*] : Say ! That's my name too.

WINDY [*amazed*] : What a coincidence ! Two good-lookin' men with the same name !

HOUSTON : My ! My !

[*They shake hands delightedly.*

WINDY : Shore is remarkable. [*Sadly.*] Only thing different between you two was that the other feller was a good friend of mine.

HOUSTON: Give me time, Windy. Give me time. [*To* LASH.] What about this feller?

LASH: There's a hundred dollars due on him on account of his takin' a horse from the Apex Ranch.

HOUSTON: You mean if these boys pay up the hundred dollars they can have him *and* the horse?

LASH: That's right.

HOUSTON [*turning on the boys*]: Well, what you idiots waitin' for?

CURLY [*sadly*]: We only got forty dollars.

[*The* COWBOYS *look hopefully at the* BOSS.

HOUSTON [*sitting down sadly*]: Shore is too bad. Sixty dollars more and you could of had him.

TEX [*sternly*]: Cooky, you got any money you been savin' up for Labor Day or whatever?

[*Without a word,* COOKY *goes to the cot and takes a filled tobacco sack from under the mattress.*

COOKY: Here's every last cent I got . . . twenty-seven dollars.

TEX: That only makes sixty-seven dollars. [*Tentatively*]: You wouldn't take our note for the rest, would you?

LASH: *I* would. But the Apex wouldn't. [*Going to the door.*] Well, Windy . . .

WINDY: Shore hate to go. Charlemagne feels right to home in your corral, Mr. Houston.

[HOUSTON *seems affected but won't give in.*

GRANNY [*after a bit of inner struggle*]: I got three dollars more. I was savin' it out to buy Genevieve a Christmas present. [*He tosses it on the table.*

WINDY: No, fellers. We can't take a gal's present money.

STUB: That's right.

GRANNY: Aw, take it. I don't know about the Christmas present. Genevieve might be dead or married by this time. I ain't seen her in twenty years.

LASH: Even if she's single, it only makes seventy

dollars. [*Opening the door.*] Time's a-gettin' on, Windy.

WINDY [*following him to the door*]: Yeah. Shore hate to leave your fine ranch, Mr. Houston.

[*They are almost out when . . .*

HOUSTON: Wait! [WINDY *pops back in.*] Well . . . [*Clears his throat, embarrassed.*] I . . . uh . . .

[*Takes out his wallet.*

[LASH *comes back in and shuts the door as* HOUSTON *counts out money.*

TEX: Why, Boss!

[*Puts his arm around his shoulder and gives it a slap.*

HOUSTON [*avoiding everyone's eye*]: Twenty-eight dollars. All I got. [*Adds it to money on the table.*

LASH [*picking it all up*]: Still two dollars short.

STUB [*speaking up suddenly in* HOUSTON'S *manner*]: We'll send you the rest when we sell them steers. [*Timidly.*] Eh, Boss?

HOUSTON: Shore!

LASH [*counting it*]: Well, I guess it's close enough.

CURLY [*anxious to get rid of* LASH]: Yeah. Well, good-bye, Sheriff.

[*He helps the* SHERIFF *stuff the money in his pockets.*

LASH [*surprised*]: Huh? Oh! Good-bye. So long, Windy.

[TEX *dashes to the door and holds it open for* LASH.

WINDY: So long, Mr. Lash. Shore had a fine time, didn't we?

[TEX *and* CURLY *almost shove* LASH *out of the door and close it after him.*

STUB: Set down, Windy. We'll talk a while. Then we'll eat and then we'll have some more music.

[WINDY *sits on the apple box. The four* COWBOYS, STUB *on the end, sit on the cot in a row.* HOUSTON *stands near the table.*

WINDY: Reminds me of old days in the Foreign Legion settin' around the stove like this, eh, Mr. Houston?

HOUSTON [*pleased*]: Yeah.

GRANNY: 'Fore I forget it, to-morrow we got to build Windy a bed.

HOUSTON: I got one up to the house that'll just about fit him.

WINDY: That's mighty nice of you but I can sleep anywheres. Why, many's the time I slept in a ship's hammock on an old square-rigged sailin' ship plowin' through a Nor'-Easter. [*The* COWBOYS *look at each other pleased, and sigh ecstatically. A far-away, excited look comes over* WINDY'S *face.*] Like the time we was sailin' 'round the Cape. Old Cape Horn. One day . . .

[*The door opens and* SHERIFF LASH, *looking guilty, walks in.*

LASH: Fellers . . . [*They look up, alarmed.*] I'm afraid it ain't right. I got to take Windy back. It ain't legal.

HOUSTON: You can't do it. He's bought and paid for.

LASH: But I got nothin' to show for him . . . there's nothin' to prove he belongs to you. I'm liable to lose my office.

[CURLY *gets the branding iron from the corner and starts to put it into the stove.*

GRANNY: Curly Jackson, you put down that there brandin' iron. That ain't the way to prove he belongs here.

WINDY: What we need is a *doc*-u-munt.

[*He gives the word an important sound.*

HOUSTON: Like the bill of sale when you sell steers.

WINDY: It's got to be more legal than that. Like this. [*He thinks.*] Here! Where's some paper?

[COOKY *takes the tablet and the pencil stub from the box over his bed.*

HOUSTON: I'll take it down.

[*He takes off a glove and sits at the table, pencil in hand.*

WINDY *puts up one foot on the bench, leans his elbow on his knee and a far-away dreamy look comes over his face as he dictates.*

WINDY : When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for the undersigned cowpuncher, Windy, to transfer his field of labor from the Lazy K to the Diamond O Ranch . . .

GRANNY [*sighs*] : Ain't that beautiful !

WINDY : And whereas and wherefore it has been solemnly declared among the cowpunchers of the aforesaid Diamond O in solemn conclave herein assembled : [The COWBOYS *sigh happily, delighted with the long words.*] that on payment of the sum of one hundred dollars, that the undersigned Windy shall have the inalienable right to dwell here in green pastures hereafter and forever. And forsaking all others, to cleave unto Mr. Houston and the cowboys and cook of the Diamond O.

HOUSTON : Better get in about the horse.

WINDY : Furthermore, he shall dwell in the aforesaid green pastures ; to wit, the Diamond O . . . [*He looks around. They all nod at him, pleased.*] . . . with his beloved Arabian thoroughbred horse, Charlemagne, formerly Bud, in Powder River County wherein aforesaid ranch is located. Signed with our hand and sealed with our heart this twenty-ninth day of October. . . . [*In his ordinary voice.*] Date it and we'll sign it.

[*He accepts the stub of pencil from* HOUSTON *and signs with a great flourish.*

HOUSTON : That'll hold 'em all right.

[*The others crowd around to sign. After signing, they go back and sit in a row on the cot.* HOUSTON *folds the document and hands it to the* SHERIFF.

COOKY : So long again, Sheriff. [*He hurries into the kitchen.*] Puddin' must be near done.

LASH : So long, all. I shore hate to go and miss the talkin'.

ALL : Good-bye. Come again. [*Etc.*]

[LASH *leaves reluctantly.*

HOUSTON [*sitting on the cot with the* COWBOYS] : Now ! What were you sayin' about the time you sailed around Cape Horn, Windy ?

[WINDY *sits on the apple box.* COOKY *starts setting the table lavishly with food, listening all the while.*

WINDY : Yeah. Well, sir, we was sailin' around like I said under full sail, royal top-gallants an' all. One day we met up with this scary-lookin' schooner. It was a pirate ship. Ever see a pirate ship ? [*They shake their heads, hanging on each word.*] Well, sir, she had white sails patched up with blue and red and yeller patches. [*The door opens quietly and* SHERIFF LASH *enters and closes the door softly behind him. He takes off his hat and stands listening to* WINDY.] And she had a big black flag. A white skull and crossbones was painted on it. [COWBOYS *exchange glances and shiver happily.* COOKY *pokes his head out of the kitchen, mixing spoon in hand, to listen.* SHERIFF LASH *draws closer to the cot.*] The Captain had a red rag 'round his head and one of his eyes was punched out, but he wore a black patch over it. He carried a knife between his teeth. A dirk, we call it. [*Fascinated,* LASH *draws closer. Without taking their eyes off* WINDY, *without a pause in the story, the* COWBOYS *move over to make room for* LASH. *He sits on the edge of the cot. The curtain begins to fall.*] " Ship ahoy," he hollers at us. " Ship ahoy, yourself," I yell back at him. So-o-o-o-o . . .

[*But the* CURTAIN *is down.*

CATHERINE PARR

By Maurice Baring

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Here we have King Henry VIII, old and very stout and very hot-tempered, quarrelling with the only one of his wives who contrived to outlive him. If we are not to miss the point of some of her remarks, we have to remember that the other wives were Katherine of Aragon, Anne Bullen [or Boleyn], Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Catherine Howard. We should remember, too, that Catherine Parr, like Anne of Cleves, was a Protestant, a "Lutheran," and Henry disliked Protestants, although he had broken away from the Church of Rome

CHARACTERS

KING HENRY VIII
QUEEN CATHERINE
A Page

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CATHERINE PARR

OR

ALEXANDER'S HORSE

SCENE—*London. Breakfast chamber in the palace. King Henry VIII and Catherine Parr are discovered sitting opposite to each other at the breakfast table. The King has just cracked a boiled egg*

KING HENRY : My egg's raw. It really is too bad.

CATHERINE : Yesterday you complained of their being hard.

KING HENRY : And so they were. I don't want a hard egg, and I don't want a raw egg. I want them to be cooked just right.

CATHERINE : You are very difficult to please. The egg was in boiling water for three minutes and a half. I boiled it myself. But give it me. I like them like that. I will boil you another.

KING HENRY : No, it's too late now. But it is a fact that you have no idea how to boil an egg. I wish you'd let them do them in the kitchen.

CATHERINE : If they're done in the kitchen you complain because they're not here when you come down, and if they are here, you say they're cold.

KING HENRY : I never say anything of the kind. The cook boils eggs beautifully.

CATHERINE : She shall boil them to-morrow.

KING HENRY : One would have thought that a woman of your experience might at least know how to boil an egg. I hate a watery egg. [*Pensively.*] Poor dear Katie used to boil eggs beautifully.

CATHERINE : Do you mean Catherine Howard or Katharine of Aragon ?

KING HENRY : I was alluding to poor, dear, misguided Katie Howard. Katharine of Aragon never was my wife. The marriage was not valid.

CATHERINE : Well, Catherine Howard ought to have known how to boil eggs considering her mother was a kitchenmaid.

KING HENRY : That is utterly untrue. Her mother was a Rochford.

CATHERINE : You're thinking of Anne Bullen.

KING HENRY : Yes, yes, to be sure, Katie's mother was a Somerset.

CATHERINE : You're thinking of Jane Seymour.

KING HENRY : Not at all. Jane Seymour was a sister of Somerset's.

CATHERINE : All I know is that Catherine Howard's mother was a kitchenmaid. And I think it's very unkind of you to mention her to me. I suppose you mean that you wish she were alive, and that you loved her better than you love me.

KING HENRY : I never said anything of the kind. All I said was that she knew how to boil eggs.

CATHERINE : You clearly meant to say that she had all the qualities which I lack.

KING HENRY : You are most unfair. I never meant to hint at any such thing. All I said was that I hate a watery egg, and my egg this morning was raw.

CATHERINE [*rising and going to the door in a temper*] : Well, the best thing you can do is to get rid of me, and to marry some one who knows how to boil an egg.

KING HENRY : Catherine, come back ! I really didn't mean to offend you. You know how to boil eggs very well.

CATHERINE [*sitting down*] : One takes an endless amount of trouble, and that's all the thanks one gets. Don't think that I shall ever boil your eggs for you again, because I shan't.

KING HENRY : I was thinking we might have a little music this morning. I have composed a new ballad which I should like to try over with you. It's for viol and lute and voice. We might try it.

CATHERINE : I'm not sure if I have time. What is it called ?

KING HENRY : It's called " The Triumph of Love," and it begins :

Come list to Alexander's deed,
Great Jove's immortal son,
Who, riding on a snow-white steed,
To Babylon did come.

CATHERINE : " Son " doesn't rhyme with " come."

KING HENRY : It's not meant to. It's assonance.

CATHERINE : Do you mean Alexander the Great ?

KING HENRY : Yes, of course.

CATHERINE : The only thing is, his horse was black.

KING HENRY : No, my dear, you're mistaken ; his horse was white.

CATHERINE : Black—black as jet.

KING HENRY : But I know for a fact it was white.

CATHERINE : Alexander's horse was black. Everybody knows it was black.

KING HENRY : It was white. You can ask any one you like.

CATHERINE : It was black. He was famous for his black horse. There are hundreds of pictures of him on his *black* horse—my father has got one.

KING HENRY : Then the painter made a mistake. Plutarch, Xenophon, Aristotle all mention his *white* horse.

CATHERINE : Black.

KING HENRY : But, my dear, how obstinate you are ! I *know* it is white——

CATHERINE : Black, *coal*-black.

KING HENRY : Have you read Xenophon ?

CATHERINE : You are thinking of something else. Even when we were children my father always showed us the picture of Alexander's *black* horse.

KING HENRY: Well, I can easily prove it to you. There's a Plutarch here in the bookcase.

[*He goes to the bookcase and takes out a book.*

CATHERINE: I remember it particularly well, because my brother had a black horse and we called it "Bucephalus," after Alexander's *black* horse.

KING HENRY [*turning over the leaves of the book*]: If it had been black it would never have been called Bucephalus—it would be absurd to call a black horse Bucephalus.

CATHERINE: Not so absurd as calling a white horse Bucephalus.

KING HENRY: He would never have chosen a black horse. He was superstitious——

CATHERINE: Just because you're superstitious and believe in saints, and worship images, you think every one else is. As a matter of fact, he chose a black horse on purpose to show he didn't care a pin about superstitions——

KING HENRY: Here it is—"χαλεπὸς εἶναι καὶ κομιδῇ δύσχρηστος"—"The horse was wild and extremely difficult to manage." In fact, he had all the characteristics of the white Thessalian horses of that day.

CATHERINE: But it doesn't say it was white. And Thessalian horses are famous for being black.

KING HENRY: You really are too obstinate for words. I will find you the proofs in Xenophon. It is distinctly stated that the horse is *white*. It is an historical fact. Nobody has ever disputed it.

CATHERINE: But Plutarch, you see, practically says it was black.

KING HENRY: Plutarch says nothing of the kind. Besides, I now remember talking about this with Wolsey, who was an excellent scholar. I distinctly remember his saying one day: "As white as Bucephalus." It's quite a common phrase among scholars.

CATHERINE : He must have said, " As black as Bucephalus."

KING HENRY : Of course, if you mean to say I tell lies——

CATHERINE : I don't mean that you tell lies, but you are mistaken—that's all.

KING HENRY : But I tell you that there is no mistake possible. I know it as well as I know my own name.

CATHERINE : Your memory plays you tricks. Just now you couldn't remember Catherine Howard's mother's name.

KING HENRY : That's nothing to do with it. Besides, I did remember it. I made a slip, that's all. But this is an historical fact which I've known all my life.

CATHERINE : I quite understand your memory failing you. You have so many names to remember. I expect you were confusing Alexander's black horse with King Alfred's white horse—the white horse of Wantage.

KING HENRY : Good gracious ! If you had a smattering of education you wouldn't say such things ! It comes of having no religion and no education, and of not knowing Latin. A Lutheran education is worse than none. Even Anne of Cleves knew Latin.

CATHERINE : Thank Heavens, I don't know Latin ! Stupid, superstitious language, fit only for bigots and monks !

KING HENRY : I suppose you mean I am a bigot.

CATHERINE : You can turn what one says into meaning anything you like. As a matter of fact, all I said was that the horse was black.

KING HENRY : I'd rather be a bigot than a Lutheran heretic.

CATHERINE : You know you're wrong and you try to escape the point. That's just like a Tudor. No Tudor could ever listen to reason.

KING HENRY: I must ask you not to insult my family.

CATHERINE: You've insulted mine, which is a far older one. My family has no blood on its escutcheon.

KING HENRY: I won't stand this any longer. [*He gets up, opens the door, and calls.*] Denny, Butts, Page, who is there? [*Enter a Page.*

PAGE: Your Majesty.

KING HENRY: Go and tell the Lord Chamberlain to make the necessary arrangements for transporting the ex-Queen to the Tower.

PAGE [*puzzled*]: Yes, your Majesty. Does your Majesty mean the late Queen's remains?

KING HENRY: I said the *ex*-Queen, you stupid boy—Queen Catherine Parr.

PAGE: Yes, your Majesty.

KING HENRY: And tell him to give orders to the Governor of the Tower to have everything ready for the ex-Queen's execution.

PAGE: Is the same ceremonial to be observed as in the case of Queen Catherine Howard, your Majesty?

KING HENRY: Yes; only there need only be one roll of drums instead of two—at the end. [*The Page goes to the door.*] And on the way ask Dr. Butts whether Alexander the Great's horse was black or white.

CATHERINE: It was black. [*The Page bows and goes out.*] Well, since I'm to be executed, I daresay you will allow me to go and pack up my things. By the way, you left your lute in my sitting-room yesterday. I will bring it down.

KING HENRY: Wait a minute, there's no hurry.

CATHERINE: I beg your pardon, I have very little time, and a great many letters to write.

KING HENRY [*hesitating*]: And I wanted to have some music.

CATHERINE: You don't expect me to accompany you now, I suppose? You had better find some one else.

I have got other things to think about during my last moments on earth.

KING HENRY [*laughing uneasily*] : I was only joking, of course, my dear. You don't mean to say you took it seriously.

CATHERINE : I am afraid I don't appreciate that kind of joke.

KING HENRY : Come, come ; let bygones be bygones, and let us have some music. I want to play you my ballad. [*Enter the Page.*

PAGE : If you please, your Majesty, I can't find the Lord Chamberlain, and Dr. Butts says your Majesty was quite correct as to the colour of Alexander the Great's horse.

KING HENRY [*beaming*] : Very good ; you can go. You need not deliver the message to the Lord Chamberlain. [*The Page bows and retires.*] And now, my dear, we'll go and play. You see, I knew I was right. [*The King opens the door with a bow.*

CATHERINE : It was black, all the same.

KING HENRY [*indulgently, as if speaking to a child*] : Yes, yes, my dear, of course it was black, but let's go and have some music. [*They go out.*

CURTAIN

THE VALIANT

By Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass

CHARACTERS

WARDEN HOLT, *about* 60
FATHER DALY, *the Prison Chaplain*
JAMES DYKE, *the Prisoner*
JOSEPHINE PARIS, *the Girl, about* 18
DAN, *a Jailer*
AN ATTENDANT

SCENE.—The Warden's office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield, Connecticut
TIME.—About half-past eleven on a rainy night

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THE VALIANT

The curtain rises upon the WARDEN'S *office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield, Connecticut. It is a large, cold, unfriendly apartment, with bare floors and staring, whitewashed walls; it is furnished only with the* WARDEN'S *flat-topped desk, and swivel-chair, with a few straight-backed chairs, one beside the desk and others against the walls, with a water-cooler and an eight-day clock. On the* WARDEN'S *desk are a telephone instrument, a row of electric push-buttons, and a bundle of forty or fifty letters. At the back of the room are two large windows, crossed with heavy bars; at the left there is a door to an anteroom, and at the right there are two doors, of which the more distant leads to the office of the deputy warden, and the nearer is seldom used.*

WARDEN HOLT, *dressed in a dark brown sack suit, with a negligé shirt and black string-tie, carelessly knotted in a bow, is seated at his desk, reflectively smoking a long, thin cigar. He is verging towards sixty, and his responsibilities have printed themselves in italics upon his countenance. His brown hair and bushy eyebrows are heavily shot with grey; there is a deep parenthesis of wrinkles at the corners of his mouth and innumerable fine lines about his eyes. His bearing indicates that he is accustomed to rank as a despot, and yet his expression is far from that of an unreasoning tyrant. He is no sentimentalist, but he believes that in each of us there is a constant oscillation of good and evil; and that all evil should be justly punished in this world, and that all good should be generously rewarded—in the next.*

Behind the WARDEN, *the prison chaplain stands at one of the barred windows, gazing steadily out into the night.* FATHER DALY *is a slender, white-haired priest of somewhat more than middle age; he is dressed in*

slightly shabby clericals. His face is calm, intellectual, and inspiring; but just at this moment it gives evidence of a peculiar depression.

The WARDEN *blows a cloud of smoke to the ceiling, inspects the cigar critically, drums on the desk, and finally peers over his shoulder at the chaplain. He clears his throat and speaks brusquely.*

THE WARDEN: Has it started to rain?

FATHER DALY [*answers without turning*]: Yes, it has.

THE WARDEN [*glaring at his cigar and impatiently tossing it aside*]: It *would* rain to-night.

[*His tone is vaguely resentful, as though the weather had added a needless fraction to his impatience.*

FATHER DALY [*glances at a big silver watch*]: It's past eleven o'clock. [*He draws a deep breath and comes slowly to the centre of the room.*] We haven't much longer to wait.

THE WARDEN: No, thank God! [*He gets up, and goes to the water-cooler; with the glass half-way to his lips he pauses.*] Was he quiet when you left him?

FATHER DALY [*a trifle abstractedly*]: Yes, yes, he was perfectly calm, and I believe he'll stay so to the very end.

THE WARDEN [*finishes his drink, comes back to his desk, and lights a fresh cigar*]: You've got to hand it to him, Father; I never saw such nerve in all my life. It isn't bluff, and it isn't a trance, either, like some of 'em have—it's plain nerve. You've certainly got to hand it to him.

[*He shakes his head in frank admiration.*

FATHER DALY [*sorrowfully*]: That's the pity of it—that a man with all his courage hasn't a better use for it. Even now, it's very difficult for me to reconcile his character, as I see it, with what we know he's done.

THE WARDEN [*continues to shake his head*]: He's got my goat all right.

FATHER DALY [*with a slight grimace*] : Yes, and he's got mine, too.

THE WARDEN : When he sent for you to-night, I hoped he was going to talk.

FATHER DALY : He did talk, very freely.

THE WARDEN : What about ?

FATHER DALY [*smiles faintly, and sits beside the desk*] : Most everything.

THE WARDEN [*looks up quickly*] : Himself ?

FATHER DALY : No. That seems to be the only subject he isn't interested in.

THE WARDEN [*sits up to his desk, and leans upon it with both elbows*] : He still won't give you any hint about who he really is ?

FATHER DALY : Not the slightest. He doesn't intend to, either. He intends to die as a man of mystery to us. Sometimes I wonder if he isn't just as much of a mystery to himself.

THE WARDEN : Oh, he's trying to shield somebody, that's all. James Dyke isn't his right name—we know that ; and we know all the rest of his story is a fake, too. Well, where's his motive ? I'll tell you where it is. It's to keep his family and his friends, wherever they are, from knowing what's happened to him. Lots of 'em have the same idea but I never knew one to carry it as far as this before. You've certainly got to hand it to him. All we know is that we've got a man under sentence ; and we don't know who he is, or where he comes from, or anything else about him, any more than we did four months ago.

FATHER DALY : It takes moral courage for a man to shut himself away from his family and his friends like that. They would have comforted him.

THE WARDEN : Not necessarily. What time is it ?

FATHER DALY : Half-past eleven.

THE WARDEN [*rises and walks over to peer out of one of the barred windows*] : I guess I'm getting too old for

this sort of thing. A necktie party didn't use to bother me so much; but every time one comes along nowadays, I've got the blue devils beforehand and afterward. And this one is just about the limit.

FATHER DALY: It certainly isn't a pleasant duty even with the worst of them.

THE WARDEN [*wheels back abruptly*]: But what gets *me* is why I should hate this one more than any of the others The boy is guilty as hell.

FATHER DALY: Yes, he killed a man. "Wilfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought."

THE WARDEN: And he pleaded guilty. So he deserves just what he's going to get.

FATHER DALY: That is the law. But has it ever occurred to you, Warden, that every now and then when a criminal behaves in a rather gentlemanly fashion to us, we instinctively think of him as just a little less of a criminal?

THE WARDEN: Yes, it has. But, all the same, this front of his makes me as nervous as the devil. He pleaded guilty all right, but he don't *act* guilty. I feel just as if to-night I was going to do something every bit as criminal as he did. I can't help it. And when I get to feeling like that, why, I guess it's pretty nearly time I sent in my resignation.

FATHER DALY [*reflectively*]: His whole attitude has been very remarkable. Why, only a few minutes ago I found myself comparing it with the fortitude that the Christian martyrs carried to their death, and yet——

THE WARDEN: He's no martyr.

FATHER DALY: I know it. And he's anything in the world but a Christian. That was just what I was going to say.

THE WARDEN: Has he got any religious streak in him at all?

FATHER DALY: I'm afraid he hasn't. He listens to me very attentively, but—[*he shrugs his shoulders*]—

it's only because I offer him companionship. Anybody else would do quite as well—and any other topic would suit him better.

THE WARDEN: Well, if he wants to face God as a heathen, *we* can't force him to change his mind.

FATHER DALY [*with gentle reproach*]: No, but we can never give up trying to save his immortal soul. And his soul to-night seems as dark and foreboding to me as a haunted house would seem to the small boys down in Wethersfield. But I haven't given up hope.

THE WARDEN: No—you wouldn't.

FATHER DALY: Are you going to talk with him again yourself?

THE WARDEN [*opens a drawer of his desk, and brings out a large envelope*]: I'll have to. I've still got some Liberty Bonds that belong to him. [*He gazes at the envelope, and smiles grimly.*] That was a funny thing—when the newspaper syndicate offered him twenty-five hundred for his autobiography, he jumped at it so quick I was sure he wanted the money for something or other. [*He slaps the envelope on the desk.*] But now the bonds are here, waiting for him, he won't say what to do with 'em. Know why? [FATHER DALY *shakes his head.*] Why, of course you do! Because the story he wrote was pure bunk from start to finish, and the only reason he jumped at the chance of writing it was so's he could pull the wool over everybody's head a little farther. He don't want the bonds, but I've got to do *something* with 'em. [*He pushes a button on the desk.*] And besides, I want to make one more try at finding out who he is.

FATHER DALY: Shall I go with you to see him or do you want to see him alone?

THE WARDEN [*sits deliberating with one hand at his forehead, and the other hand tapping the desk*]: Father, you gave me a thought—I believe I'm

going to do something to-night that's never been done before in this prison—that is to say, not in all the twenty-eight years that *I've* been warden.

FATHER DALY : What's that ?

THE WARDEN [*who has evidently come to an important decision, raps the desk more forcibly with his knuckles*] : Instead of our going to see him, I'll have that boy brought into this office and let him sit here with you and me until the time comes for us all to walk through that door to the execution room.

FATHER DALY [*startled*] : What on earth is your idea in doing a thing like that ?

THE WARDEN : Because maybe if he sits here awhile with just you and me, and we go at him right, he'll loosen up and tell us about himself. It'll be different from being in his cell ; it'll be sort of free and easy, and maybe he'll weaken. And then, besides, if we take him to the scaffold through this passage-way, maybe I can keep the others quiet. If they don't know when the job's being done, they may behave 'emselves. I don't want any such yelling and screeching to-night as we had with that Greek. [*A* JAILER *in blue uniform enters from the deputy's room and stands waiting.*] Dan, I want you to get Dyke and bring him to me here. [*The* JAILER *stares blankly at him and the* WARDEN'S *voice takes on an added note of authority.*] Get Dyke and bring him in here to me.

THE JAILER : Yes, sir.

[*He starts to obey the order but halts in the doorway and turns as the* WARDEN *speaks again.* It is *apparent that the* WARDEN *is a strict disciplinarian of the prison staff.*

THE WARDEN : Oh, Dan !

THE JAILER : Yes, sir ?

THE WARDEN : How nearly ready are they ?

THE JAILER : They'll be all set in ten or fifteen minutes, sir. Twenty minutes at the outside.

THE WARDEN [*very sharp and magisterial*]: Now, I don't want any hitch or delay in this thing to-night. If there is, somebody's going to get in awful Dutch with me. Pass that along.

THE JAILER: There won't be none, sir.

THE WARDEN: When everything's ready—not a second before—you let me know.

THE JAILER: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: I'll be right here with Dyke and Father Daly.

THE JAILER [*eyes widening*]: Here?

THE WARDEN [*peremptorily*]: Yes, here!

THE JAILER [*crushes down his astonishment*]: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: When everything and everybody is ready, you come from the execution room through the passage—[*he gestures towards the nearer door on the right*]—open that door quietly and stand there.

THE JAILER: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: You don't have to say anything, and I don't *want* you to say anything. Just stand there. That all clear?

THE JAILER: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: That'll be the signal for us to start—understand?

THE JAILER: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN [*draws a deep breath*]: All right. Now bring Dyke to me.

THE JAILER: Yes, sir. [*He goes out dazedly.*

FATHER DALY: What about the witnesses and the reporters?

THE WARDEN: They're having their sandwiches and coffee now—the deputy'll have 'em seated in another ten or fifteen minutes. Let 'em wait. [*His voice becomes savage.*] I'd like to poison the lot of 'em. Reporters! Witnesses! [*The telephone bell rings.*] Hello—yes—yes—what's that?—Yes, yes, right here—who wants

him? [*To* FATHER DALY.] Father, it's the Governor! [*His expression is tense.*

FATHER DALY [*his voice also gives evidence of incredulity and hope*]: What! [*He walks swiftly over to the desk.*] Is it about Dyke?

THE WARDEN: Ssh. [*He turns to the telephone.*] Yes, this is Warden Holt speaking, Hello—oh, hello, Governor Fuller, how are you? Oh, I'm between grass and hay, thanks. Well, this isn't my idea of a picnic exactly—yes—yes—Oh, I should say in about half an hour or so—everything's just about ready. [*His expression gradually relaxes, and* FATHER DALY, *with a little sigh and shake of the head, turns away.*] Oh, no, there won't be any slip-up—yes, we made the regular tests, one this afternoon and another at nine o'clock to-night—Oh, no, Governor, nothing can go wrong—Well, according to the law I've got to get it done as soon as possible after midnight, but you're the Governor of the state—How long?—Certainly, Governor, I can hold it off as long as you want me to—What say?—A *girl!*—You're going to send her to me?—you *have* sent her!—she ought to be here by this time?—All right, Governor, I'll ring you up when it's over. Good-bye. [*He hangs up the receiver, mops his forehead with his handkerchief, and turns to* FATHER DALY *in great excitement.*] Did you get *that*? Some girl thinks Dyke's her long-lost brother, and she's persuaded the old man to let her come out here to-night—he wants me to hold up the job until she's had a chance to see him. She's due here any minute, he says—in his own car—escorted by his own private secretary! Can you beat it?

FATHER DALY [*downcast*]: Poor girl!

THE WARDEN [*blots his forehead vigorously*]: For a minute there I thought it was going to be a reprieve at the very least. Whew!

FATHER DALY: So did I.

[*The door from the deputy's room is opened, and* DYKE *comes in, followed immediately by the* JAILER. DYKE *halts just inside the door and waits passively to be told what to do next. He has a lean, pale face, with a high forehead, good eyes, and a strong chin; his mouth is ruled in a firm straight line. His wavy hair is prematurely grey. His figure has the elasticity of youth, but he might pass among strangers either as a man of forty, or as a man of twenty-five, depending upon the mobility of his features at a given moment. He is dressed in a dark shirt open at the throat, dark trousers without belt or suspenders, and soft slippers. The* JAILER *receives a nod from the* WARDEN, *and goes out promptly, closing the door behind him.*

THE WARDEN [*swings half-way around in his swivel-chair*]: Sit down, Dyke.

[*He points to the chair at the right of his desk.*

DYKE: Thanks.

[*He goes directly to the chair and sits down.*

THE WARDEN [*leans back, and surveys him thoughtfully*: FATHER DALY *remains in the background*]: Dyke, you've been here under my charge for nearly four months and I want to tell you that from first to last you've behaved yourself like a gentleman.

DYKE [*his manner is vaguely cynical without being in the least impertinent*]: Why should I make you any trouble?

THE WARDEN: Well, you *haven't* made me any trouble, and I've tried to show what I think about it. I've made you every bit as comfortable as the law would let me.

DYKE: You've been very kind to me. [*He glances over his shoulder at the chaplain.*] And you, too, Father.

THE WARDEN: I've had you brought in here to stay from now on. [DYKE *looks inquiringly at him.*]

No, you won't have to go back to your cell again. You're to stay right here with Father Daly and me.

DYKE [*carelessly*] : All right.

THE WARDEN [*piqued by this cool reception of the distinguished favour*] : You don't seem to understand that I'm doing something a long way out of the ordinary for you.

DYKE : Oh, yes, I do, but maybe *you* don't understand why it doesn't give me much of a thrill.

FATHER DALY [*comes forward*] : My son, the Warden is only trying to do you one more kindness.

DYKE : I know he is, Father, but the Warden isn't taking very much of a gamble. From now on, one place is about the same as another.

THE WARDEN : What do you mean ?

DYKE [*his voice is very faintly sarcastic*] : Why, I mean that I'm just as much a condemned prisoner here as when I was in my cell. That door [*he points to it*] leads right *back* to my cell. Outside those windows are armed guards every few feet. You yourself can't get through the iron door in that anteroom [*he indicates the door to the left*] until somebody on the outside unlocks it ; and I know as well as you do where *that* door [*he points to the nearer door on the right*] leads to.

THE WARDEN [*stiffly*] : Would you rather wait in your cell ?

DYKE : Oh, no, this is a little pleasanter. Except——

THE WARDEN : Except what ?

DYKE : In my cell, I could smoke.

THE WARDEN [*shrugs his shoulders*] : What do you want—cigar or cigarette ?

DYKE : A cigarette, if it's all the same.

[*The* WARDEN *opens a drawer of his desk, takes out a box of cigarettes, removes one and hands it to* DYKE. *The* WARDEN *striking a match, lights* DYKE'S *cigarette, and then carefully puts out the match.*

DYKE [*smiles faintly*] : Thanks. You're a good host.

THE WARDEN : Dyke, before it's too late I wish you'd think over what Father Daly and I've said to you so many times.

DYKE : I've thought of nothing else.

THE WARDEN : Then—as man to man—and this is your last chance—who are you ?

DYKE [*inspects his cigarette*] : Who am I ? James Dyke—a murderer.

THE WARDEN : That isn't your real name and we know it.

DYKE : You're not going to execute a name—you're going to execute a *man*. What difference does it make whether you call me Dyke or something else ?

THE WARDEN : You had another name once. What was it ?

DYKE : If I had, I've forgotten it.

FATHER DALY : Your mind is made up, my son ?

DYKE : Yes, Father, it is.

THE WARDEN : Dyke.

DYKE : Yes, sir ?

THE WARDEN : Do you see this pile of letters ?

[*He places his hand over it.*

DYKE : Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN [*fingers them*] : Every one of these letters is about the same thing and all put together we've got maybe four thousand of 'em. These here are just a few samples.

DYKE : What about them ?

THE WARDEN : We've had letters from every State in the Union and every province in Canada. We've had fifteen or twenty from England, four or five from France, two from Australia and one from Russia.

DYKE : Well ?

THE WARDEN [*inclines towards him*] : Do you know what every one of those letters says—what four thousand different people are writing to me about ?

DYKE : No, sir.

THE WARDEN [*speaks slowly and impressively*] : Who *are* you—and are you the missing son—or brother or husband—or sweetheart ?

DYKE [*flicks his cigarette ashes to the floor*] : Have you answered them ?

THE WARDEN : No, I couldn't. I want you to.

DYKE : How's that ?

THE WARDEN : I want you to tell me who you are. [DYKE *shakes his head.*] Can't you see you *ought* to do it ?

DYKE : No, sir, I can't exactly see that. Suppose you explain it to me.

THE WARDEN [*suddenly*] : You're trying to shield somebody, aren't you ?

DYKE : Yes—no, I'm not !

THE WARDEN [*glances at* FATHER DALY *and nods with elation*] : Who is it ? Your family ?

DYKE : I said I'm not.

THE WARDEN : But first, you said you were.

DYKE : That was a slip of the tongue.

THE WARDEN [*has grown persuasive*] : Dyke, just listen to me a minute. Don't be narrow, look at this thing in a big, broad way. Suppose you should tell me your real name, and I publish it, it'll bring an awful lot of sorrow, let's say, to *one* family, *one* home, and that's your own. That's probably what you're thinking about. Am I right ? You want to spare your family and I don't blame you. On the surface, it sure would look like a mighty white thing for you to do. But look at it *this* way : suppose you came out with the truth, flat-footed, why, you might put all that sorrow into *one* home—your own—but at the same time you'd be putting an immense amount of relief in four thousand—others. Don't you get that ? Don't you figure you owe something to all these other people ?

DYKE : Not a thing.

FATHER DALY [*has been fidgeting*] : My boy, the Warden is absolutely right. You do owe something to the other people—you owe them peace of mind —and for the sake of all those thousands of poor, distressed women, who imagine God knows what, I beg of you to tell us who you are.

DYKE : Father, I simply can't do it.

FATHER DALY : Think carefully, my boy, think very carefully. We're not asking out of idle curiosity.

DYKE : I know that, but please don't let's talk about it any more. [*To the* WARDEN.] You can answer those letters whenever you want to, and you can say I'm not the man they're looking for. That'll be the truth, too. Because I haven't any mother —or father—or sister—or wife—or sweetheart. That's fair enough, isn't it ?

FATHER DALY [*sighs wearily*] : As you will, my son.

THE WARDEN : Dyke, there's one more thing.

DYKE : Yes ?

THE WARDEN : Here are the Liberty Bonds [*he takes up the large envelope from his desk*] that belong to you. Twenty-five hundred dollars in real money.

DYKE [*removes the bonds and examines them*] : Good-looking, aren't they ?

THE WARDEN [*casually*] : What do you want me to do with them ?

DYKE : Well, I can't very well take them with me, so, under the circumstances, I'd like to put them where they'll do the most good.

THE WARDEN [*more casually yet*] : Who do you want me to send 'em to ?

DYKE [*laughs quietly*] : Now, Warden Holt, you didn't think you were going to catch me that way, did you ?

THE WARDEN [*scowls*] : Who'll I send 'em to ? I can't keep 'em here, and I can't destroy 'em. What do you want to do with 'em ?

DYKE [*ponders diligently and tosses the envelopes to the desk*] ; I don't know. I'll think of something to do with them. I'll tell you in just a minute. Is there anything else ?

THE WARDEN : Not unless you want to make some sort of statement.

DYKE : No, I guess I've said everything. I killed a man and I'm not sorry for it—that is, I'm not sorry I killed that particular person. I——

FATHER DALY [*raises his hand*] : Repentance——

DYKE [*raises his own hand in turn*] : I've heard that repentance, Father, is the sick bed of the soul—and mine is very well and flourishing. The man deserved to be killed ; he wasn't fit to live. It was my duty to kill him, and I did it. I'd never struck a man in anger in all my life, but when I knew what that fellow had done, I knew I had to kill him, and I did it deliberately and intentionally—and carefully. I knew what I was doing, and I haven't any excuse—that is, I haven't any excuse that satisfies the law. Now, I learned pretty early in life that whatever you do in this world you have to pay for in one way or another. If you kill a man, the price you have to pay is this [*he makes a gesture which sweeps the entire room*] and that [*he points to the nearer door on the right*] and I'm going to pay it. That's all there is to that. And an hour from now, while my body is lying in there, if a couple of angel policemen grab my soul and haul it up before God——

FATHER DALY [*profoundly shocked*] : My boy, my boy, please——

DYKE : I beg your pardon, Father. I don't mean to trample on anything that's sacred to you, but what I do mean to say is this : If I've got to be judged by God Almighty for the crime of murder, I'm not afraid, because the other fellow will certainly be there, too, won't he ? And when God hears the

whole story and both sides of it, which *you* never heard and never will—and they never heard it in the court-room either—why, then, if he's any kind of a God at all, I'm willing to take my chances with the other fellow. That's how concerned I am about the hereafter. And, if it'll make you feel any better, Father, why I *do* rather think there's going to be a hereafter. I read a book once that said a milligramme of musk will give out perfume for seven thousand years, and a milligramme of radium will give out light for *seventy* thousand. Why shouldn't a soul—mine, for instance—live more than twenty-seven? But if there *isn't* any hereafter—if we just die and are dead and that's all—why, I'm still not sorry and I'm not afraid, because I'm quits with the other fellow—the law is quits with me, and it's all balanced on the books. And that's all there is to that.

[*An attendant enters from the anteroom.*

THE WARDEN: Well? What is it?

THE ATTENDANT: Visitor to see you, sir. With note from Governor Fuller. [*He presents it.*

THE WARDEN [*barely glances at the envelope*]: Oh! A young woman?

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: Is Mrs. Case there?

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: Have the girl searched, and then take her into the anteroom and wait till I call you.

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir. [*He goes out.*

THE WARDEN: Dyke, a young woman has just come to see you—do you want to see her?

DYKE: I don't think so. What does she want?

THE WARDEN: She thinks maybe she's your sister, and she's come a thousand miles to find out.

DYKE: She's wrong. I haven't any sister.

THE WARDEN [*hesitates*]: Will I tell her that, or do you want to tell it to her yourself?

DYKE : Oh, you tell her.

THE WARDEN : All right.

[*He starts to rise but resumes his seat as* DYKE *speaks.*

DYKE : Just a second—she's come a thousand miles to see me, did you say ?

THE WARDEN : Yes, and she's got special permission from the Governor to talk to you—that is, with my O.K.

DYKE : A year ago, nobody'd have crossed the street to look at me, and now they come a thousand miles !

FATHER DALY : This is one of your debts to humanity, my boy. It wouldn't take you two minutes to see her, and, if you don't, after she's made that long journey in hope and dread and suffering——

DYKE : Where can I talk with her—here ?

THE WARDEN : Yes.

DYKE : Alone ? [*The* WARDEN *is doubtful.*] Why, you don't need to be afraid. I haven't the faintest idea who the girl is, but if she happens to be some poor misguided sentimental fool, with a gun or a pocketful of cyanide of potassium, she's wasting her time. I wouldn't cheat the sovereign state of Connecticut for anything in the world—not even to please a young lady.

THE WARDEN : Dyke, there's something about you that gets everybody.

DYKE : How about the jury ?

THE WARDEN : You've got a sort of way with you——

DYKE : How about that spread-eagle district attorney ?

THE WARDEN : I'm going to let you talk with that girl in here—alone.

DYKE : Thanks.

THE WARDEN : It's a sort of thing that's never been done before, but if I put you on your honour——

DYKE [*cynically*] : My honour ! Thank you, so much.

FATHER DALY : Warden, are you sure it's wise ?

DYKE : Father, I'm disappointed in you. Do you

imagine I'd do anything that could reflect on Warden Holt—or you—or the young lady—or *me*?

THE WARDEN: Father, will you take Dyke into the deputy's room? I want to speak to the young lady first.

FATHER DALY: Certainly. Come, my boy.

[FATHER DALY *and* DYKE *start towards the deputy's room.*

THE WARDEN: I'll call you in just a couple of minutes.

DYKE: We promise not to run away.

[*They go out together.*

THE WARDEN [*calls*]: Wilson!

[*The* ATTENDANT *enters from the left.*

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: Is the girl there?

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: Frisked?

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN: Everything all right?

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN [*throws away his cigar*]: Bring her in.

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir. [*He speaks through the door at the left.*] Step this way, Miss. This here's the Warden.

[*A young girl appears on the threshold, and casts about in mingled curiosity and apprehension. She is fresh and wholesome, and rather pretty; but her manner betrays a certain spiritual aloofness from the ultra-modern world—a certain delicate reticence of the flesh—which immediately separates her from the metropolitan class. Indeed, she is dressed far too simply for a metropolitan girl of her age; she wears a blue tailored suit with deep white cuffs and a starched white sailor-collar, and a small blue hat which fits snugly over her fluffy hair. Her costume is not quite conservative enough to be literally old-fashioned, but it hints at the taste and repression of an old-fashioned home.*

She is neither timid nor aggressive; she is self-unconscious. She looks at the WARDEN *squarely, but not in boldness, and yet not in feminine appeal; she has rather the fearlessness of a girl who has lost none of her illusions about men in general. Her expression is essentially serious; it conveys, however, the idea that her seriousness is due to her present mission, and that ordinarily she takes an active joy in the mere pleasure of existence.*

THE WARDEN [*he had expected a very different type of visitor, so that he is somewhat taken aback*]: All right, Wilson.

THE ATTENDANT: Yes, sir. [*He goes out.*

THE WARDEN [*with grave deference, half rises*]: Will you sit down?

THE GIRL: Why—thank you very much.

[*She sits in the chair beside the desk and regards him trustfully.*

THE WARDEN [*he is palpably affected by her youth and innocence, and he is not quite sure how best to proceed, but eventually he makes an awkward beginning*]: You've had an interview with the Governor, I understand?

THE GIRL: Yes, sir. I was with him almost an hour.

THE WARDEN: And you want to see Dyke, do you?

THE GIRL: Yes, sir. I *hope* I'm not—too late.

THE WARDEN: No, you're not too late. [*He is appraising her carefully.*] But I want to ask you a few questions beforehand. [*Her reaction of uncertainty induces him to soften his tone.*] There isn't anything to get upset about. I just want to make it easier for you, not harder. Where do you live?

THE GIRL: In Ohio.

THE WARDEN [*very kindly*]: What place?

THE GIRL: In Pennington, sir. It's a little town not far from Columbus.

THE WARDEN: And you live out there with your father and mother?

THE GIRL: No, sir—just my mother and I. My father died when I was a little baby.

THE WARDEN: Why didn't your mother come here herself, instead of sending you?

THE GIRL: She couldn't. She's sick.

THE WARDEN: I see. Have you any brothers or sisters?

THE GIRL [*slightly more at ease*]: Just one brother, sir—this one. He and I were the only children. We were very fond of each other.

THE WARDEN: He was considerably older than you?

THE GIRL: Oh, yes. He's ten years older.

THE WARDEN: Why did he leave home?

THE GIRL: I don't really know, sir, except he just wanted to be in the city. Pennington's pretty small.

THE WARDEN: How long is it since you've seen him?

THE GIRL: It's eight years.

THE WARDEN [*his voice is almost paternal*]: As long as that? Hm! And how old are you now?

THE GIRL: I'm almost eighteen.

THE WARDEN [*repeats slowly*]: Almost eighteen. Hm! And are you sure after all this time you'd recognize your brother if you saw him?

THE GIRL: Well—[*she looks down, as if embarrassed to make the admission*]—of course I *think* so, but maybe I couldn't. You see, I was only a little girl when he went away—he wasn't a bad boy, sir, I don't think he could ever be really bad—but if this *is* my brother, why he's been in a great deal of trouble and you know that trouble makes people look different.

THE WARDEN: Yes, it does. But what makes you think this man Dyke may be your brother—and why didn't you think of it sooner? The case has been in the papers for the last six months.

THE GIRL: Why, it wasn't until last Tuesday that mother saw a piece in the *Journal*—that's the Columbus paper—that he'd written all about himself, and there was one little part of it that sounded so like Joe—like the funny way he used to say things—and then there was a picture that looked the least little *bit* like him—well, mother just wanted me to come East and find out for sure.

THE WARDEN: It's too bad she couldn't come herself. She'd probably know him whether he'd changed or not.

THE GIRL: Yes, sir. But I'll do the best I can.

THE WARDEN: When was the last time you heard from him, and where was he, and what was he doing?

THE GIRL: Why, it's about five or six years since we had a letter from Joe. He was in Seattle, Washington.

THE WARDEN: What doing?

THE GIRL: I don't remember. At home, though, he worked in the stationery store. He liked books.

THE WARDEN [*suspiciously*]: Why do you suppose he didn't write home?

THE GIRL: I—couldn't say. He was just—thoughtless.

THE WARDEN: Wasn't in trouble of any kind?

THE GIRL: Oh, *no*! Never. That is—unless he's—here now.

THE WARDEN [*deliberates*]: How are you going to tell him?

THE GIRL: I don't know what you mean.

THE WARDEN: Why, you say maybe you wouldn't know him even if you saw him—and I'll guarantee this man Dyke won't help you out very much. How do you think you're going to tell? Suppose he don't want to be recognized by you or anybody else? Suppose he's so ashamed of himself he——

THE GIRL : I'd thought of that. I'm just going to talk to him—ask him questions—about things he and I used to do together—I'll watch his face, and if he's my brother, I'm sure I can tell.

THE WARDEN [*with tolerant doubt*] : What did you and your brother ever use to do that would help you out now ?

THE GIRL : He used to play games with me when I was a little girl, and tell me stories—that's what I'm counting on mostly—the stories.

THE WARDEN : I'm afraid——

THE GIRL : Especially Shakespeare stories.

THE WARDEN : Shakespeare !

THE GIRL : Why, yes. He used to get the plots of the plays—all the Shakespeare plays—out of a book by a man named Lamb, and then he'd tell me the stories in his own words. It was wonderful !

THE WARDEN : I'm certainly afraid he——

THE GIRL : But best of all he'd learn some of the speeches from the plays themselves. He liked to do it—he was sure he was going to be an actor or something—he was in all the high school plays, always. And then he'd teach some of the speeches to me, and we'd say them to each other. And one thing—every night he'd sit side of my bed, and when I got sleepy there were two speeches we'd always say to each other, like good-night—two speeches out of *Romeo and Juliet,* and then I'd go to sleep. I can see it all. [*The* WARDEN *shakes his head.*] Why do you do that ?

THE WARDEN : This boy isn't your brother.

THE GIRL : Do you think he isn't ?

THE WARDEN : I *know* he isn't.

THE GIRL : How do you ?

THE WARDEN : This boy never heard of Shakespeare —much less learned him. [*He presses a button on his desk.*] Oh, I'll let you see him for yourself, only you might as well be prepared. [*The* ATTENDANT

enters from the anteroom.] Tell Dyke and Father Daly to come in here—they're in the deputy's room.

THE ATTENDANT : Yes, sir.

[*He crosses behind the* WARDEN, *and goes off to the right.*

THE WARDEN : If he turns out to be your brother—which he won't—you can have, say, an hour with him. If he don't, you'll oblige me by cutting it as short as you can.

THE GIRL : You see, I've got to tell mother something perfectly definite. She's worried so long about him, and—and *now* the suspense is perfectly terrible for her.

THE WARDEN : I can understand that. You're a plucky girl.

THE GIRL : Of course, it would be awful for us if this *is* Joe, but even that would be better for mother than just to stay awake nights, and wonder and wonder, and never *know* what became of him.

[*The* ATTENDANT *opens the door of the Deputy's room, and when* DYKE *and* FATHER DALY *have come in, he crosses again behind the* WARDEN, *and is going out at the left when the* WARDEN *signs to him and he stops.*

THE WARDEN [*gets to his feet*] : Dyke, this is the young lady that's come all the way from Pennington, Ohio, to see you.

DYKE [*who has been talking in an undertone to* FATHER DALY, *raises his head quickly*] : Yes, sir ?

THE WARDEN : I've decided you can talk with her here—alone.

[*The* GIRL *has risen, breathless, and stands fixed ;* DYKE *inspects her coldly from head to foot.*

DYKE : Thank you. It won't take long.

THE WARDEN [*has been scanning the girl's expression ; now, as he sees that she has neither recognized* DYKE *nor failed to recognize him, he makes a little grimace*

in confirmation of his own judgment] : Father Daly and I'll stay in the deputy's office. We'll leave the door open. Wilson, you stand in the anteroom with the door open.

DYKE [*bitterly*] : My honour !

THE WARDEN : What say ?

DYKE : I didn't say anything.

THE WARDEN [*to the girl*] : Will you please remember what I told you about the time ?

THE GIRL : Oh, yes, sir.

THE WARDEN : Come, Father.

[*They go off into the Deputy's room, and the* ATTENDANT, *at a nod from the* WARDEN, *goes off at the left.*

DYKE *and the* GIRL *are now facing each other;* DYKE *is well poised and insouciant and gives the impression of complete indifference to the moment. The* GIRL, *on the other hand, is deeply agitated and her agitation is gradually increased by* DYKE'S *own attitude.*

THE GIRL [*after several efforts to speak*] : Mother sent me to see you.

DYKE [*politely callous*] : Yes ?

THE GIRL [*compelled to drop her eyes*] : You see, we haven't seen or heard of my brother Joe for ever so long, and mother thought—after what we read in the papers——

DYKE : That I might be your brother Joe ?

THE GIRL [*obviously relieved*] : Yes, that's it.

DYKE : Well, you can easily see that I'm not your brother, can't you ?

THE GIRL [*stares at him again*] : I'm not sure. You look a little like him, just as the picture in the paper did, but then again, it's so long—[*she shakes her head dubiously*] and I'd thought of Joe so differently——

DYKE [*his manner is somewhat indulgent, as though to a child*] : As a matter of fact, I couldn't be *your*

brother, or anybody else's brother, because I never had a sister. So that rather settles it.

THE GIRL: Honestly?

DYKE: Honestly.

THE GIRL [*unconvinced, becomes more appealing*]: What's your real name?

DYKE: Dyke—James Dyke.

THE GIRL: That's sure enough your name?

DYKE: Sure enough. You don't think I'd tell a lie at this stage of the game, do you?

THE GIRL [*musing*]: No, I don't believe you would. Where do you come from—I mean where were you born?

DYKE: In Canada, but I've lived all over.

THE GIRL: Didn't you ever live in Ohio?

DYKE: No. Never.

THE GIRL: What kind of work did you do—what was your business?

DYKE: Oh, I'm sort of Jack-of-all-trades. I've been everything a man *could* be—except a success.

THE GIRL: Do you like books?

DYKE: Books?

THE GIRL: Yes—books to read.

DYKE: I don't read when there's anything better to do. I've read a lot here.

THE GIRL: Did you ever sell books—for a living, I mean?

DYKE: Oh, no.

THE GIRL [*growing confused*]: I hope you don't mind my asking so many questions. But I——

DYKE: No—go ahead, if it'll relieve your mind any.

THE GIRL: You went to school somewhere, of course—high school?

DYKE: No, I never got that far.

THE GIRL: Did you ever want to be an actor? Or *were* you ever?

DYKE: No, just a convict.

THE GIRL [*helplessly*]: Do you know any poetry?

DYKE : Not to speak of.

THE GIRL [*delays a moment, and then, watching him very earnestly, she recites just above her breath*] :

> Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face
> Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
> For that which——

[*Realizing that* DYKE'S *expression is one of utter vacuity she falters, and breaks off the quotation, but she continues to watch him unwaveringly.*

Don't you know what that is ?

DYKE : No, but to tell the truth, it sounds sort of silly to *me*. Doesn't it to you ?

THE GIRL [*her intonation has become slightly forlorn, but she gathers courage, and puts him to one more test*] :

> Good-night, good-night, parting is such sweet sorrow
> That I shall say good-night till it be morrow.

DYKE [*his mouth twitches in amusement*] : Eh ?

THE GIRL : What comes next ?

DYKE : Good Lord, *I* don't know.

THE GIRL [*gazes intently, almost imploringly, at him as though she is making a struggle to read his mind. Then she relaxes and holds out her hand*] : Good-bye. You—you're *not* Joe, are you ? I—had to come and find out, though. I hope I've not made you too unhappy.

DYKE [*ignores her hand*] : You're not going now ?

THE GIRL [*spiritless*] : Yes. I promised the—is he the Warden ? that man in there ?—I said I'd go right away if you weren't my brother. And you aren't, so——

DYKE : You're going back to your mother ?

THE GIRL : Yes.

DYKE : I'm surprised that she sent a girl like you on a sorry errand like this, instead of——

THE GIRL : She's very sick.

DYKE : Oh, that's too bad.

THE GIRL [*twisting her handkerchief*] : No, she's not well at all. And most of it's from worrying about Joe.

DYKE : Still, when you tell her that her son isn't a murderer—at least, that he isn't *this* one—that'll comfort her a good deal, won't it ?

THE GIRL [*reluctantly*] : Yes, I think maybe it will, only——

DYKE : Only what ?

THE GIRL : I don't think mother'll ever be *really* well again until she finds out for certain where Joe is and what's become of him.

DYKE [*shakes his head compassionately*] : Mothers ought not to be treated like that. I wish I'd treated *mine* better. By the way, you didn't tell me what your name is.

THE GIRL : Josephine Paris.

DYKE [*is suddenly attentive*] : Paris ? That's an unusual name. I've heard it somewhere, too.

THE GIRL : Just like the name of the city—in France.

DYKE [*knitting his brows*] : And your brother's name was Joseph ?

THE GIRL : Yes—they used to call us Joe and Josie —that's funny, isn't it ?

DYKE [*thoughtfully*] : No, I don't think it's so very funny. I rather like it.

[*He passes his hand over his forehead as if trying to coerce his memory.*

THE GIRL : What's the matter ?

DYKE [*frowning*] : I was thinking of something—now, what on earth was that boy's name ! Wait a minute, don't tell me—wait a minute—I've got it ! [*He punctuates his triumph with one fist in the palm of the other hand.*] Joseph Anthony Paris !

THE GIRL [*amazed*] : Why, that's his name ! That's Joe ! How did you ever——

DYKE [*his manner is very forcible and convincing*] : Wait ! Now listen carefully to what I say, and don't interrupt me, because we've only got a minute, and I want you to get this all straight, so you can tell your mother. When the war came along I enlisted and I was overseas for four years—with the Canadians. Early one morning we'd staged a big trench raid, and there was an officer who'd been wounded coming back, and was lying out there in a shell-hole under fire. The Jerries were getting ready for a raid of their own, so they were putting down a box barrage with light guns and howitzers and a few heavies. This officer was lying right in the middle of it. Well, all of a sudden a young fellow dashed out of a trench not far from where I was, and went for that officer. He had to go through a curtain of shells and, more than that, they opened on him with rifles and machine-guns. The chances were just about a million to one against him, and he must have known it, but he went out just the same. He got the officer in his arms and started back, but he'd only gone a few yards when a five-point-nine landed right on top of the two of them. Afterward, we got what was left—the identification tag was still there—and that was the name—Joseph Anthony Paris !

THE GIRL [*carries both hands to her breast*] : Oh !

DYKE : If that was your brother's name, then you can tell your mother that he died like a brave man and a soldier, three years ago, in France.

THE GIRL : Joe—my brother Joe—is dead ?

DYKE : On the field of battle. It was one of the wonderful, heroic things that went almost unnoticed, as so many of them did. If an officer had seen it, there'd have been a decoration for your mother to keep and remember him by.

THE GIRL: And you were there—and saw it?

DYKE: I was there and saw it. It was three years ago. That's why you and your mother haven't heard from him. And if you don't believe what I've said, why, you just write up to Ottawa and get the official record. Of course [*he shrugs his shoulders contemptuously*] those records are in terribly poor shape, but at least they can tell you what battalion he fought with, when he went overseas. Only you mustn't be surprised no matter whether they say he was killed in action, or died of wounds, or is missing, or even went through the whole war with his outfit, and was honourably discharged. They really don't know what happened to half the men. But I've told you the truth. And it certainly ought to make your mother happy when she knows that her boy died as a soldier, and not as a criminal.

THE GIRL [*is transfigured*]: Yes, yes, it will!

DYKE: And does it make you happy, too?

THE GIRL [*nods repeatedly*]: Yes. So happy—after what we were both afraid of—I can't even cry—yet. [*She brushes her eyes with her handkerchief.*] I can hardly wait to take it to her.

DYKE [*struck by a sudden inspiration*]: I want to give you something else to take to her. [*He picks up from the desk the envelope containing the Liberty Bonds and seals it.*] I want you to give this to your mother from me. Tell her it's from a man who was at Vimy Ridge and saw your brother die, so it's a sort of memorial for him. [*He touches her arm as she absently begins to tear open the envelope.*] No, don't you open it—let *her* do it.

THE GIRL: What is it? Can't I know?

DYKE: Never mind now, but give it to her. It's all I've got in the world and it's too late now for me to do anything else with it. And have your mother buy a little gold star to wear for her son—

and you get one, too, and wear it—here— [*He touches his heart.*] Will you ?

THE GIRL : Yes—I will. And yet somehow I'll almost feel that I'm wearing it for you, too.

DYKE [*shakes his head soberly*] : Oh, no ! You mustn't ever do that. I'm not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with a boy like your brother, and now I'm afraid it *is* time for you to go. I'm sorry, but —you'd better. I'm glad you came before it was too late, though.

THE GIRL [*gives him her hand*] : Good-bye, and thank you. You've done more for me—and mother—than I could possibly tell you. And—and I'm so sorry for you—so *truly sorry*—I wish I could only do something to make you a tiny bit happier, too. Is there anything I could do ?

DYKE [*stares at her and by degrees he becomes wistful*] : Why—yes, there is, Only I——

[*He leaves the sentence uncompleted.*

THE GIRL : What is it ?

DYKE [*looks away*] : I can't tell you. I never should have let myself think of it.

THE GIRL : Please tell me. I want you to. For—for Joe's sake, tell me what I can do.

DYKE [*his voice is low and desolate*] : Well—in all the months I've been in this hideous place, you're the first girl I've seen. I didn't ever expect to see one again. I'd forgotten how much like angels women look. I've been terribly lonesome to-night, especially, and if you really do want to do something for me—for your brother's sake—you see, you're going to leave me in just a minute and—and I haven't any sister of my own, or anybody else, to say good-bye to me—so, if you could—*really* say good-bye——

[*She gazes at him for a moment, understands, flushes, and then slowly moves into his outstretched arms. He holds her close to him, touches his lips to her forehead twice, and releases her.*

DYKE [*thickly*] : Good-bye, my dear.

THE GIRL : Good-night. [*She endeavours to smile, but her voice catches in her throat.*] Good-bye.

DYKE [*impulsively*] : What is it ?

THE GIRL [*shakes her head*] : N-nothing.

DYKE : Nothing ?

THE GIRL [*clutches her handkerchief tight in her palm*] : I was thinking—I was thinking what I used to say to my brother—for good-night. [*She very nearly breaks down.*] If I *only* could have—have said it to him just once more—for good-bye.

DYKE : What was it ?

THE GIRL : I—I told it to you once, and you said it was silly.

DYKE [*softly*] : Say it again.

THE GIRL [*she cannot quite control her voice*] :

Good-night, good-night, parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good-night till it be morrow.

[*She goes uncertainly towards the anteroom, hesitates, almost turns back, and then with a choking sob she hurries through the door and closes it behind her. For several seconds* DYKE *stands rigidly intent upon that door ; until at length, without changing his attitude or his expression, he speaks very tenderly and reminiscently :*

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast ;
Would *I* were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.

[*The* WARDEN *and* FATHER DALY *come in quietly from the Deputy's room ; and as they behold* DYKE, *how rapt and unconscious of them he is, they look at each other questioningly. The* WARDEN *glances at the clock and makes as though to interrupt*

DYKE'S *solitary reflections but* FATHER DALY *quietly restrains him.*

The CHAPLAIN *sits down in one of the chairs at the back wall; the* WARDEN *crosses on tiptoe and sits at his desk; he is excessively nervous and he continually refers to the clock.* DYKE *turns, as though unwillingly, from the door; there are depths in his eyes, and his thoughts are evidently far away. He sits in the chair to the right of the* WARDEN'S *desk and leans outward, his right hand on his knee. He puts his left hand to his throat as though to protect it from a sudden pain. He gazes straight ahead into the unknown and speaks in reverie:*

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

[*He stops and muses for a time, while the* WARDEN *glances perplexedly at* FATHER DALY *to discover if the priest can interpret what* DYKE *is saying.* FATHER DALY *shakes his head. Abruptly* DYKE'S *face is illumined by a new and welcome recollection; and again he speaks, while the* WARDEN *tries in vain to comprehend him:*

Cowards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once.

[*He stops again and shudders a trifle; his head droops and he repeats, barely above a whisper:*

The valiant never taste of death but once.

[*The nearer door on the right is opened noiselessly and*

the JAILER, *in obedience to his instructions, steps just inside the room and stands there mute.* FATHER DALY *and the* WARDEN *glance at the* JAILER, *and with significance at each other, and both rise, tardily. The* WARDEN'S *hand, as it rests on his desk, is seen to tremble. There is a moment of dead silence; presently* DYKE *lifts his head and catches sight of the motionless* ATTENDANT *at the open door. With a quick intake of his breath, he starts half out of his seat and stares, fascinated; he sinks back slowly, and turns his head to gaze first at* FATHER DALY *and then at the* WARDEN. *The* WARDEN *averts his eyes, but* FATHER DALY'S *expression is of supreme pity and encouragement. Involuntarily,* DYKE'S *hand again goes creeping upward towards his throat, but he arrests it. He grasps the arms of his chair and braces himself; he rises then, and stands very erect, in almost the position of a soldier at attention.*

THE WARDEN [*swallows hard*]: Dyke!

FATHER DALY [*brushes past the* WARDEN, *his right hand lifted as though in benediction*]: My son!

DYKE [*regards them fixedly; his voice is low and steady*]: All right, let's go.

[*He faces about, and with his head held proud and high, and his shoulders squared to the world, he moves slowly towards the open door.* FATHER DALY, *with the light of his calling in his eyes, steps in line just ahead of* DYKE. *The* WARDEN, *his mouth set hard, falls in behind. When they have all gone forward a pace or two,* FATHER DALY *begins to speak, and* DYKE *to reply;* FATHER DALY'S *voice is strong and sweet; and* DYKE *speaks just after him, not mechanically, but in brave and unfaltering response.*

FATHER DALY: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills——"

DYKE : " The valiant never taste of death but once."

FATHER DALY : " From whence cometh my help."

DYKE : " The valiant never taste of death but once."

FATHER DALY [*has almost reached the door ; his voice rises a semi-tone, and gains in emotion*] : " My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth."

DYKE : " The valiant never taste of death—but once."

[*When the* WARDEN, *whose hands are tightly clenched, has passed the threshold, the* JAILER *follows and closes the door behind him. There is a very brief pause, and then*

CURTAIN

THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS

By Norman McKinnel

Originally produced at the Duke of York's Theatre on August 24, 1901, with the following cast :

The Bishop	Mr. A. E. George
The Convict	Mr. Norman McKinnel
Persomé (*the Bishop's sister, a widow*)	Miss Nannie Griffin
Marie	Miss Constance Walton
Sergeant of Gendarmes .	Mr. Frank Woolfe

It was revived at the Kingsway Theatre on Friday, December 20, 1907, with the following cast :

The Bishop	Mr. Henry Vibart
The Convict	Mr. Lemmon Warde
Persomé	Miss Evelyn Hall
Marie	Miss Maud Stewart
Sergeant of Gendarmes .	Mr. Douglas Gordon

Time.—The beginning of the nineteenth century
Place.—France, about thirty miles from Paris

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THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS

SCENE.—*The kitchen of the* BISHOP'S *cottage. It is plainly but substantially furnished. Doors* R. *and* L. *and* L. C. *Window* R. C. *Fireplace with heavy mantelpiece down* R. *Oak settle with cushions behind door* L. C. *Table in window* R. C. *with writing materials and crucifix (wood). Eight-day clock* R. *of window. Kitchen dresser, with cupboard to lock, down* L. *Oak dining-table* R. C. *Chairs, books, etc. Winter wood scene without. On the mantelpiece are two very handsome candlesticks, which look strangely out of place with their surroundings*

[MARIE *and* PERSOMÉ *discovered.* MARIE *stirring some soup on the fire.* PERSOMÉ *laying the cloth, etc.*

PERSOMÉ : Marie, isn't the soup boiling yet ?

MARIE : Not yet, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Well, it ought to be. You haven't tended the fire properly, child.

MARIE : But, Madam, you yourself made the fire up.

PERSOMÉ : Don't answer me back like that. It is rude.

MARIE : Yes, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Then don't let me have to rebuke you again.

MARIE : No, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : I wonder where my brother can be. [*Looking at the clock.*] It is after eleven o'clock and no sign of him. Marie !

MARIE : Yes, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Did Monseigneur the Bishop leave any message for me ?

MARIE : No, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Did he tell you where he was going ?

MARIE : Yes, Madam.

PERSOMÉ [*imitating*] : " Yes, Madam." Then why haven't you told me, stupid !

MARIE : Madam didn't ask me.

PERSOMÉ : But that is no reason for your not telling me, is it ?

MARIE : Madam said only this morning I was not to chatter, so I thought——

PERSOMÉ : Ah, mon Dieu, you thought ! Ah ! it is hopeless.

MARIE : Yes, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Don't keep saying " Yes, Madam," like a parrot, nincompoop.

MARIE : No, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Well, where did Monseigneur say he was going ?

MARIE : To my mother's, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : To your mother's indeed ! And why, pray ?

MARIE : Monseigneur asked me how she was, and I told him she was feeling poorly.

PERSOMÉ : You told him she was feeling poorly, did you ? And so my brother is to be kept out of his bed, and go without his supper, because you told him she was feeling poorly. There's gratitude for you !

MARIE : Madam, the soup is boiling !

PERSOMÉ : Then pour it out, fool, and don't chatter. [MARIE *about to do so.*] No, no ; not like that. Here, let me do it, and do you put the salt cellars on the table—the silver ones.

MARIE : The silver ones, Madam ?

PERSOMÉ : Yes, the silver ones. Are you deaf as well as stupid ?

MARIE : They are sold, Madam.

PERSOMÉ : Sold ! [*with horror*] sold ! Are you mad ? Who sold them ? Why were they sold ?

MARIE : Monseigneur the Bishop told me this afternoon while you were out to take them to Monsieur Gervais, who has often admired them, and sell them for as much as I could.

PERSOMÉ : But you had no right to do so without asking me.

MARIE [*with awe*] : But, Madam, Monseigneur the Bishop told me.

PERSOMÉ : Monseigneur the Bishop is a—ahem ! but —but what can he have wanted with the money ?

MARIE : Pardon, Madam, but I think it was for Mère Gringoire.

PERSOMÉ : Mère Gringoire indeed. Mère Gringoire ! What, the old witch who lives at the top of the hill, and who says she is bedridden because she is too lazy to do any work ? And what did Mère Gringoire want with the money, pray ?

MARIE : Madam, it was for the rent. The bailiff would not wait any longer, and threatened to turn her out to-day if it were not paid, so she sent little Jean to Monseigneur to ask for help, and——

PERSOMÉ : Oh, mon Dieu ! It is hopeless, hopeless. We shall have nothing left. His estate is sold, his savings have gone. His furniture, everything. Were it not for my little dot we should starve ! And now my beautiful—beautiful [*sob*] salt cellars. Ah, it is too much, too much.

[*She breaks down crying.*

MARIE : Madam, I am sorry. If I had known——

PERSOMÉ : Sorry, and why, pray ? If Monseigneur the Bishop chooses to sell his salt cellars he may do so, I suppose. Go and wash your hands, they are disgracefully dirty.

MARIE : Yes, Madam [*going towards* R.].

[*Enter the* BISHOP, C.

BISHOP : Ah ! how nice and warm it is in here. It is worth going out in the cold for the sake of the comfort of coming in.

[PERSOMÉ *has hastened to help him off with his coat, etc.* MARIE *has dropped a deep curtsy.*

BISHOP: Thank you, dear. [*Looking at her.*] Why, what is the matter? You have been crying. Has Marie been troublesome, eh? [*Shaking his finger at her.*] Ah!

PERSOMÉ: No, it wasn't Marie—but—but——

BISHOP: Well, well, you shall tell me presently. Marie, my child, run home now; your mother is better. I have prayed with her, and the doctor has been. Run home! [MARIE *putting on cloak and going.*] And, Marie, let yourself in quietly in case your mother is asleep.

MARIE: Oh, thanks, thanks, Monseigneur.

[*She goes to door* C.*; as it opens the snow drives in.*

BISHOP: Here, Marie, take my comforter, it will keep you warm. It is very cold to-night.

MARIE [*shamefacedly*]: Oh no, Monseigneur!

PERSOMÉ: What nonsense, brother; she is young, she won't hurt.

BISHOP: Ah, Persomé, you have not been out, you don't know how cold it has become. Here, Marie, let me put it on for you. [*Does so.*] There! Run along, little one. [*Exit* MARIE, C.

PERSOMÉ: Brother, I have no patience with you. There, sit down and take your soup, it has been waiting ever so long. And if it is spoilt, it serves you right.

BISHOP: It smells delicious.

PERSOMÉ: I'm sure Marie's mother is not so ill that you need have stayed out on such a night as this. I believe those people *pretend* to be ill just to have the Bishop call on them. They have no thought of the Bishop!

BISHOP: It is kind of them to want to see me.

PERSOMÉ: Well, for my part, I believe that charity begins at home.

BISHOP: And so you make me this delicious soup. You are very good to me, sister.

PERSOMÉ: Good to you, yes! I should think so. I should like to know where you would be without me to look after you. The dupe of every idle scamp or lying old woman in the parish.

BISHOP: If people lie to me they are poorer, not I.

PERSOMÉ: But it is ridiculous; you will soon have nothing left. You give away everything, everything!!!

BISHOP: My dear, there is so much suffering in the world, and I can do so little [*sighs*], so very little.

PERSOMÉ: Suffering, yes; but you never think of the suffering you cause to those who love you best, the suffering you cause to me.

BISHOP [*rising*]: You, sister dear. Have I hurt you? Ah, I remember you had been crying. Was it my fault? I didn't mean to hurt you. I am sorry.

PERSOMÉ: Sorry. Yes. Sorry won't mend it. Humph! Oh, do go on eating your soup before it gets cold.

BISHOP: Very well, dear. [*Sits.*] But tell me——

PERSOMÉ: You are like a child, I can't trust you out of my sight. No sooner is my back turned than you get that little minx Marie to sell the silver salt cellars.

BISHOP: Ah, yes, the salt cellars. It is a pity. You —you were proud of them?

PERSOMÉ: Proud of them. Why, they have been in our family for years.

BISHOP: Yes, it is a pity. They were beautiful; but still, dear, one can eat salt out of china just as well.

PERSOMÉ: Yes, or meat off the floor, I suppose. Oh, it's coming to that. And as for that old wretch, Mère Gringoire, I wonder she had the audacity to send here again. The last time I saw her I gave her such a talking to that it ought to have had some effect.

BISHOP : Yes ! I offered to take her in here for a day or two, but she seemed to think it might distress you.

PERSOMÉ : Distress me ! ! !

BISHOP : And the bailiff, who is a very just man, would not wait longer for the rent, so—so—you see I *had* to pay it.

PERSOMÉ : *You had* to pay it.

[*Gesture of comic despair.*

BISHOP : Yes, and you see I had no money, so I had to dispose of the salt cellars. It was fortunate I had them, wasn't it ? [*smiling*]. But I'm sorry I have grieved you.

PERSOMÉ : Oh, go on ! go on ! you are incorrigible. You'll sell your candlesticks next.

BISHOP [*with real concern*] : No, no, sister, not my candlesticks.

PERSOMÉ : Oh ! Why not ? They would pay somebody's rent, I suppose.

BISHOP : Ah, you are good, sister, to think of that ; but—but I don't want to sell them. You see, dear, my mother gave them to me on—on her death-bed just after you were born, and—and she asked me to keep them in remembrance of her, so I would like to keep them ; but perhaps it is a sin to set such store by them ?

PERSOMÉ : Brother, brother, you will break my heart [*with tears in her voice*]. There ! don't say anything more. Kiss me and give me your blessing. I am going to bed. [*They kiss.*

[BISHOP *makes the sign of the cross and murmurs a blessing.* PERSOMÉ *locks cupboard door and goes* R.

PERSOMÉ : Don't sit up too long and tire your eyes.

BISHOP : No, dear ! Good-night ! [PERSOMÉ *exits* R.

BISHOP [*comes to table and opens a book, then looks up at the candlesticks*] : They would pay somebody's rent. It was kind of her to think of that.

[*He stirs the fire, trims the lamp, arranges some books and papers, sits down, is restless, shivers slightly; clock outside strikes twelve and he settles to read. Music during this. Enter the* CONVICT *stealthily; he has a long knife and seizes the* BISHOP *from behind.*

CONVICT: If you call out you are a dead man!

BISHOP: But, my friend, as you see, I am reading. Why should I call out? Can I help you in any way?

CONVICT [*hoarsely*]: I want food. I'm starving. I haven't eaten anything for three days. Give me food quickly, quickly, curse you.

BISHOP [*eagerly*]: But certainly, my son, you shall have food. I will ask my sister for the keys of the cupboard [*rising*].

CONVICT: Sit down! ! ! [*The* BISHOP *sits smiling.*] None of that, my friend! I'm too old a bird to be caught with chaff. You would ask your sister for the keys, would you? A likely story! You would rouse the house too. Eh? Ha, ha! A good joke truly. Come, where is the food? I want no keys. I have a wolf inside me tearing at my entrails, tearing me; quick, tell me where the food is.

BISHOP [*aside*]: I wish Persomé would not lock the cupboard. [*Aloud*] Come, my friend, you have nothing to fear. My sister and I are alone here.

CONVICT: How do I know that?

BISHOP: Why, I have just told you.

[CONVICT *looks long at the* BISHOP.

CONVICT: Humph! I'll risk it. [BISHOP, *going to door* R.] But mind! Play me false, and as sure as there are devils in Hell I'll drive my knife through your heart. I have nothing to lose.

BISHOP: You have your soul to lose, my son; it is of more value than my heart. [*At door* R., *calling.*] Persomé, Persomé.

[*The* CONVICT *stands behind him with his knife ready.*

PERSOMÉ [*within*] : Yes, brother.

BISHOP : Here is a poor traveller who is hungry. If you are not undressed will you come and open the cupboard and I will give him some supper.

PERSOMÉ [*within*] : What, at this time of night ? A pretty business truly. Are we to have no sleep now, but to be at the beck and call of every ne'er-do-weel who happens to pass ?

BISHOP : But, Persomé, the traveller is hungry.

PERSOMÉ : Oh, very well, I am coming. [PERSOMÉ *enters* R., *she sees the knife in the* CONVICT'S *hand. Frightened.*] Brother, what is he doing with that knife ?

BISHOP : The knife—oh, well, you see, dear, perhaps he may have thought that I—I had *sold* ours.

[*Laughs gently.*

PERSOMÉ : Brother, I am frightened. [*Aside to him.*] He glares at us like a wild beast.

CONVICT : Hurry, I tell you. Give me food or I'll stick my knife in you both and help myself.

BISHOP : Give me the keys, Persomé. [*She gives them to him.*] And now, dear, you may go to bed.

[PERSOMÉ *going. The* CONVICT *springs in front of her.*

CONVICT : Stop ! Neither of you leave this room till I do. [*She looks at the* BISHOP.

BISHOP : Persomé, will you favour this gentleman with your company at supper ? He evidently desires it.

PERSOMÉ : Very well, brother.

[*She sits down at table staring at the two.*

BISHOP : Here is some cold pie and a bottle of wine and some bread.

CONVICT : Put them on the table, and stand below it so that I can see you.

[BISHOP *does so, and opens drawer in table, taking out knife and fork, looking at the knife in* CONVICT'S *hand.*

CONVICT : *My* knife is sharp. [*He runs his finger along the edge and looks at them meaningly.*] And as for forks [*taking it up*], faugh ! *steel* [*he throws it away*]. We don't use forks in prison.

PERSOMÉ : Prison ?

CONVICT [*cutting off an enormous slice, which he tears with his fingers like an animal. Then starts*] : What was that ? [*He looks at the door.*] Why the devil do you leave the window unshuttered and the door unbarred so that any one can come in ?

[*Shutting them.*

BISHOP : That is why they are left open.

CONVICT : Well, they are shut now !

BISHOP [*sighs*] : For the first time in thirty years.

[CONVICT *eats voraciously and throws a bone on the floor.*

PERSOMÉ : Oh, my nice clean floor !

[BISHOP *picks up the bone and puts it on plate.*

CONVICT : You're not afraid of thieves ?

BISHOP : I am sorry for them.

CONVICT : Sorry for them. Ha, ha, ha ! [*Drinks from bottle.*] That's a good one. Sorry for them. Ha, ha, ha ! [*Drinks. Suddenly*] What the devil are you ?

BISHOP : I am a Bishop.

CONVICT : Ha, ha, ha ! A Bishop. Holy Virgin, a Bishop. Well, I'm damned !

BISHOP : I hope you may escape that, my son. Persomé, you may leave us ; this gentleman will excuse you.

PERSOMÉ : Leave you with——

BISHOP : Please ! My friend and I can talk more—freely then.

[*By this time, owing to his starving condition, the wine has affected him.*

CONVICT : What's that ? Leave us. Yes, yes, leave us. Good-night. I want to talk to the Bishop. The Bishop. Ha, ha ! [*Laughs as he drinks, and coughs.*

BISHOP : Good-night, Persomé.

[*He holds the door open and she goes out* R., *holding in her skirts as she passes the* CONVICT.

CONVICT [*chuckling to himself*] : The Bishop. Ha, ha ! Well, I'm—— [*Suddenly very loudly.*] D'you know what I am ?

BISHOP : I think one who has suffered much.

CONVICT : Suffered ? [*Puzzled.*] Suffered ? My God, yes. [*Drinks.*] But that's a long time ago. Ha, ha ! That was when I was a man. Now I'm not a man ; now I'm a number : number 15,729, and I've lived in Hell for ten years.

BISHOP : Tell me about it—about Hell.

CONVICT : Why ? [*Suspiciously*] Do you want to tell the police—to set them on my track ?

BISHOP : No ! I will not tell the police.

CONVICT [*looks at him earnestly*] : I believe you [*scratching his head*], but damn me if I know why.

BISHOP [*laying his hand on the* CONVICT'S *arm*] : Tell me about the time—the time before you went to—Hell.

CONVICT : It's so long ago I forget ; but I had a little cottage, there were vines growing on it. [*Dreamily*] They looked pretty with the evening sun on them, and, and—there was a woman—she was [*thinking hard*]—she must have been my wife—yes. [*Suddenly and very rapidly*] Yes, I remember ! She was ill, we had no food, I could get no work, it was a bad year, and my wife, my Jeanette, was ill, dying [*pause*], so I stole to buy her food. [*Long pause ; the* BISHOP *gently pats his hand.*] They caught me. I pleaded to them, I told them why I stole, but they laughed at me, and I was sentenced to ten years in the prison hulks [*pause*], ten years in Hell. The night I was sentenced the gaoler told me—told me Jeanette was dead. [*Sobs with fury*] Ah, damn them, damn them. God curse them all.

[*He sinks on the table, sobbing.*

BISHOP: Now tell me about the prison ship, about Hell.

CONVICT: Tell you about it? Look here, I was a man once. I'm a beast now, and they made me what I am. They chained me up like a wild animal, they lashed me like a hound. I fed on filth, I was covered with vermin, I slept on board, and I complained. Then they lashed me again. For ten years, ten years. Oh God! They took away my name, they took away my soul, and they gave me a devil in its place; but one day they were careless, one day they forgot to chain up their wild beast, and he escaped. He was free. That was six weeks ago. I was free, free to starve.

BISHOP: To starve?

CONVICT: Yes, to starve. They feed you in Hell, but when you escape from it you starve. They were hunting me everywhere, and I had no passport, no name. So I stole again. I stole these rags. I stole my food daily. I slept in the woods, in barns, anywhere. I dare not ask for work, I dare not go into a town to beg, so I stole, and they have made me what I am, they have made me a thief. God curse them all.

[*Empties the bottle and throws it into the fireplace* R., *smashing it.*

BISHOP: My son, you have suffered much, but there is hope for all.

CONVICT: Hope! Hope! Ha, ha, ha!

[*Laughs wildly.*

BISHOP: You have walked far; you are tired. Lie down and sleep on the couch there and I will get you some coverings.

CONVICT: And if any one comes?

BISHOP: No one will come; but if they do, are you not my friend?

CONVICT: Your friend? [*Puzzled.*

BISHOP: They will not molest the Bishop's friend.

CONVICT : The Bishop's friend.

[*Scratching his head utterly puzzled.*

BISHOP : I will get the coverings. [*Exit* L.

CONVICT [*looks after him, scratches his head*] : The Bishop's friend ! [*He goes to fire to warm himself and notices the candlesticks. He looks round to see if he is alone, and takes them down, weighing them.*] Silver, by God, and heavy. What a prize !

[*He hears the* BISHOP *coming, and in his haste drops one candlestick on the table.*

[*Enter the* BISHOP.

BISHOP [*sees what is going on, but goes to the settle up* L. *with coverings*] : Ah, you are admiring my candlesticks. I am proud of them. They were a gift from my mother. A little too handsome for this poor cottage perhaps, but all I have to remind me of her. Your bed is ready. Will you lie down now ?

CONVICT : Yes, yes, I'll lie down now. [*Puzzled*] Look here, why the devil are you—ki—kind to me ? [*Suspiciously*] What do you want ? Eh ?

BISHOP : I want you to have a good sleep, my friend.

CONVICT : I believe you want to convert me ; save my soul, don't you call it ? Well, it's no good—see ? I don't want any damned religion, and as for the Church—Bah ! I hate the Church.

BISHOP : That is a pity, my son, as the Church does not hate you.

CONVICT : You are going to try to convert me. Oh ! Ha, ha ! that's a good idea. Ha, ha, ha ! No, no, Monseigneur the Bishop. I don't want any of your Faith, Hope, and Charity—see ? So anything you do for me you're doing to the devil—[*defiantly*] understand ?

BISHOP : One must do a great deal for the devil in order to do a little for God.

CONVICT [*angrily*] : I don't want any damned religion, I tell you.

BISHOP : Won't you lie down now ? It is late.

CONVICT [*grumbling*] : Well, all right ; but I won't be preached at, I—I—— [*On couch*] You're sure no one will come ?

BISHOP : I don't think they will ; but if they do—you yourself have locked the door.

CONVICT : Humph ! I wonder if it's safe ? [*He goes to the door and tries it, then turns and sees the* BISHOP *holding the covering, annoyed.*] Here ! you go to bed. I'll cover myself. [*The* BISHOP *hesitates.*] Go on, I tell you.

BISHOP : Good-night, my son. [*Exit* L. [CONVICT *waits till he is off, then tries the* BISHOP'S *door.*

CONVICT : No lock, of course. Curse it. [*Looks round and sees the candlesticks again.*] Humph ! I'll have another look at them. [*He takes them up and toys with them.*] Worth hundreds, I'll warrant. If I had these turned into money they'd start me fair. Humph ! The old boy's fond of them too, said his mother gave him them. His mother, yes. They didn't think of *my* mother when they sent me to Hell. He was kind to me too—but what's a Bishop for except to be kind to you ? Here, cheer up, my heart, you're getting soft. God ! wouldn't my chain mates laugh to see 15,729 hesitating about collaring the plunder because he felt good. Good ! Ha, ha ! Oh, my God ! Good ! Ha, ha ! 15,729 getting soft. That's a good one. Ha, ha ! No, I'll take his candlesticks and go. If I stay here he'll preach at me in the morning and I'll get soft. Damn him and his preaching too. Here goes !

[*He takes the candlesticks, stows them in his coat, and cautiously exits* L. C. *As he does so the door slams.*

PERSOMÉ [*without*] : Who's there ? Who's there, I say ? Am I to get no sleep to-night ? Who's there, I say ? [*Enter* R. PERSOMÉ.] I'm sure I heard the door shut. [*Looking round.*] No one here ? [*Knocks*

at the BISHOP'S *door* L. *Sees the candlesticks have gone.*] The candlesticks, the candlesticks. They are gone. Brother, brother, come out. Fire, murder, thieves! [*Enter* BISHOP, L.

BISHOP: What is it, dear, what is it? What is the matter?

PERSOMÉ: He has gone. The man with the hungry eyes has gone, and he has taken your candlesticks.

BISHOP: Not my candlesticks, sister, surely not those? [*He looks and sighs.*] Ah, that is hard, very hard. I, I—— He might have left me those. [*Almost breaking down*] They were all I had.

PERSOMÉ: Well, but go and inform the police. He can't have gone far. They will soon catch him, and you'll get the candlesticks back again. You don't deserve them, though, leaving them about with a man like that in the house.

BISHOP: You are right, Persomé. It was my fault. I led him into temptation.

PERSOMÉ: Oh, nonsense! led him into temptation indeed! The man is a thief, a common scoundrelly thief. I knew it the moment I saw him. Go and inform the police or I will.

[*Going; but he stops her.*

BISHOP: And have him sent back to prison, [*very softly*] sent back to Hell! No, Persomé. It is a just punishment for me; I set too great store by them. It was a sin. My punishment is just; but, oh God, it is hard, it is very hard.

[*He buries his head in his hands.*

PERSOMÉ: No, brother, you are wrong. If you won't tell the police, I will. I will not stand by and see you robbed. I know you are my brother and my Bishop, and the best man in all France; but you are a fool, I tell you, a child, and I will not have your goodness abused. I shall go and inform the police. [*Going.*

BISHOP: Stop, Persomé. The candlesticks were mine; they are *his* now. It is better so. He has more need of them than I. My mother would have wished it so had she been here.

PERSOMÉ: But—— [*Great knocking without.*

SERGEANT [*without*]: Monseigneur, Monseigneur, we have something for you. May we enter?

BISHOP: Enter, my son.

[*Enter* SERGEANT *and three* GENDARMES *with* CONVICT *bound. The* SERGEANT *carries the candlesticks.*

PERSOMÉ: Ah, so they have caught you, villain, have they?

SERGEANT: Yes, madam, we found this scoundrel slinking along the road, and as he wouldn't give any account of himself we arrested him on suspicion. Holy Virgin, isn't he strong and didn't he struggle? While we were securing him these candlesticks fell out of his pockets. [PERSOMÉ *seizes them, goes to table, and brushes them with her apron lovingly.*] I remembered the candlesticks of Monseigneur the Bishop, so we brought him here that you might identify them, and then we'll lock him up.

[*The* BISHOP *and the* CONVICT *have been looking at each other—the* CONVICT *with dogged defiance.*

BISHOP: But—but I don't understand; this gentleman is my very good friend.

SERGEANT: Your friend, Monseigneur! ! Holy Virgin! Well! ! !

BISHOP: Yes, my friend. He did me the honour to sup with me to-night, and I—I have given him the candlesticks.

SERGEANT [*incredulously*]: You gave *him—him* your candlesticks? Holy Virgin!

BISHOP [*severely*]: Remember, my son, that she is holy.

SERGEANT [*saluting*]: Pardon, Monseigneur.

BISHOP: And now I think you may let your prisoner go.

SERGEANT: But he won't show me his papers; he won't tell me who he is.

BISHOP: I have told you he is my friend.

SERGEANT: Yes, that's all very well, but——

BISHOP: He is your Bishop's friend; surely that is enough.

SERGEANT: Well, but——

BISHOP: Surely? [*A pause.*

[*The* SERGEANT *and the* BISHOP *look at each other.*

SERGEANT: I—I—Humph! [*To his men.*] Loose the prisoner. [*They do so.*] Right about turn, quick march!

[*Exit* SERGEANT *and* GENDARMES. *A long pause.*

CONVICT [*very slowly, as if in a dream*]: You told them you had given me the candlesticks—given me them. By God!

PERSOMÉ [*shaking her fist at him and hugging the candlesticks to her breast*]: Oh, you scoundrel, you pitiful scoundrel. You come here, and are fed, and warmed, and—and you thieve; steal from your benefactor. Oh, you blackguard.

BISHOP: Persomé, you are overwrought. Go to your room.

PERSOMÉ: What, and leave you with him to be cheated again, perhaps murdered? No, I will not.

BISHOP [*with slight severity*]: Persomé, leave us. I wish it.

[*She looks hard at him, then turns towards her door.*

PERSOMÉ: Well, if I must go, at least I'll take the candlesticks with me.

BISHOP [*more severely*]: Persomé, place the candlesticks on that table and leave us.

PERSOMÉ [*defiantly*]: I will not!

BISHOP [*loudly and with great severity*]; I, your Bishop, command it.

[PERSOMÉ *does so with great reluctance and exits* R.

CONVICT [*shamefacedly*]: Monseigneur, I'm glad I

didn't get away with them ; curse me, I am. I'm glad.

BISHOP : Now won't you sleep here ? See, your bed is ready.

CONVICT : No ! [*looking at the candlesticks*] : No ! no ! I daren't, I daren't. Besides, I must go on, I must get to Paris ; it is big, and I—I can be lost there. They won't find me there. And I must travel at night. Do you understand ?

BISHOP : I see—you must travel by night.

CONVICT : I—I—didn't believe there was any good in the world ; one doesn't when one has been in Hell ; but somehow I—I—know you're good, and —and it's a queer thing to ask, but—but could you, would you bless me before I go ? I—I think it would help me. I——

[*Hangs his head very shamefacedly.*

[BISHOP *makes sign of the cross and murmurs blessing.*

CONVICT [*tries to speak, but a sob almost chokes him*] : Good-night. [*He hurries towards the door.*

BISHOP : Stay, my son, you have forgotten your property [*giving him the candlesticks*].

CONVICT : You mean me—you want me to take them ?

BISHOP : Please ; they may help you.

[*The* CONVICT *takes the candlesticks in absolute amazement.*

BISHOP : And, my son, there is a path through the woods at the back of this cottage which leads to Paris ; it is a very lonely path, and I have noticed that my good friends the gendarmes do not like lonely paths at night. It is curious.

CONVICT : Ah, thanks, thanks, Monseigneur. I—I—[*He sobs.*] Ah ! I'm a fool, a child to cry, but somehow you have made me feel that—that it is just as if something had come into me—as if I were a man again and not a wild beast.

[*The door at back is open and the* CONVICT *is standing in it.*

BISHOP [*putting his hand on his shoulder*]: Always remember, my son, that this poor body is the Temple of the Living God.

CONVICT [*with great awe*]: The Temple of the Living God. I'll remember. [*Exit* L. C.

[*The* BISHOP *closes the door and goes quietly to the prie-dieu in the window* R., *he sinks on his knees, and bows his head in prayer.*

SLOW CURTAIN

THE PRINCESS AND THE WOODCUTTER

By A. A. Milne

CHARACTERS

The Woodcutter
The Princess
The King
The Queen
The Red Prince
The Blue Prince
The Yellow Prince
Attendants

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THE PRINCESS AND THE WOODCUTTER

The Woodcutter's Song

WOODCUTTER :

A humble woodman I,
A plain hard-working peasant,
A simple soul, who on the whole
Finds life extremely pleasant.
I envy none to-day
His lofty rank or station,
Enough for me to have a free
And healthy occupation.

Refrain :

Singing and swinging my axe
On the monarch uprearing,
Stroke upon stroke, till the oak
Crashes down in the clearing.
So shall I vanquish, perchance,
Both the haughty and splendid,
Love shall have brought them to naught
When the tale shall be ended.

In realms of faery lore
I need no guide or tutor,
And there, I learn, princesses yearn
To wed the humble suitor.
The truly noble mind
All outward show despises ;
It is not rank, or wealth, or swank
That takes the highest prizes !

Refrain [as before]

The WOODCUTTER *is discovered singing at his work, in a glade of the forest outside his hut. He is tall and*

strong, and brave and handsome; all that a woodcutter ought to be. Now it happened that the PRINCESS *was passing, and as soon as his song is finished, sure enough, on she comes.*

PRINCESS: Good-morning, Woodcutter.

WOODCUTTER: Good-morning.

[*But he goes on with his work.*

PRINCESS [*after a pause*]: Good-morning, Woodcutter.

WOODCUTTER: Good-morning.

PRINCESS: Don't you ever say anything except good-morning?

WOODCUTTER: Sometimes I say good-bye.

PRINCESS: You *are* a cross woodcutter to-day.

WOODCUTTER: I have work to do.

PRINCESS: You are still cutting wood? Don't you ever do anything else?

WOODCUTTER: Well, you are still a Princess; don't *you* ever do anything else?

PRINCESS [*reproachfully*]: Now, that's not fair, Woodcutter. You can't say I was a Princess yesterday, when I came and helped you stack your wood. Or the day before, when I tied up your hand where you had cut it. Or the day before that, when we had our meal together on the grass. Was I a Princess then?

WOODCUTTER: Somehow I think you were. Somehow I think you were saying to yourself, "Isn't it sweet of a Princess to treat a mere woodcutter like this?"

PRINCESS: I think you are perfectly horrid. I've a good mind never to speak to you again. [*Turns* R.] And—and I would, if only I could be sure that you would notice I wasn't speaking to you.

WOODCUTTER: After all, I'm just as bad as you. Only yesterday I was thinking to myself how unselfish I was to interrupt my work in order to talk to a mere Princess.

PRINCESS : Yes, but the trouble is that you *don't* interrupt your work.

WOODCUTTER [*interrupting it and going up to her with a smile*] : Madam, I am at your service.

PRINCESS : I wish I thought you were.

WOODCUTTER : Surely you have enough people at your service already. Princes and chancellors and chamberlains and waiting-maids.

PRINCESS : Yes, that's just it. That's why I want your help. Particularly in the matter of Princes.

WOODCUTTER : Why, has a suitor come for the hand of Her Royal Highness ?

PRINCESS : Three suitors. And I hate them all.

WOODCUTTER : And which are you going to marry ?

PRINCESS : I don't know. Father hasn't made up his mind yet.

WOODCUTTER : And this is a matter which father—which His Majesty decides for himself ?

PRINCESS : Why, of course ! You should read the history books, Woodcutter. The suitors to the hand of a Princess are always set some trial of strength or test of quality by the King, and the winner marries his daughter.

WOODCUTTER : Well, I don't live in a palace, and I think my own thoughts about these things. I'd better get back to my work.

[*He goes on with his chopping.*

PRINCESS [*gently, after a pause*] : Woodcutter !

WOODCUTTER [*looking up*] : Oh, are you there ? I thought you were married by this time.

PRINCESS [*meekly*] : I don't want to be married. [*Hastily*] I mean, not to any of those three.

WOODCUTTER : You can't help yourself.

PRINCESS : I know. That's why I wanted *you* to help me.

WOODCUTTER [*going up to her*] : Can a simple woodcutter help a Princess ?

PRINCESS: Well, perhaps a simple one couldn't, but a clever one might.

WOODCUTTER: What would his reward be?

PRINCESS: His reward would be that the Princess, not being married to any of her three suitors, would still be able to help him chop his wood in the mornings. . . . I *am* helping you, aren't I?

WOODCUTTER [*smiling*]: Oh, decidedly.

PRINCESS [*nodding*]: I thought I was.

WOODCUTTER: It is kind of a great lady like yourself to help so humble a fellow as I.

PRINCESS [*meekly*]: I'm not *very* great.

[*And she isn't. She is the smallest, daintiest little Princess that ever you saw.*

WOODCUTTER: There's enough of you to make a hundred men unhappy.

PRINCESS: And one man happy?

WOODCUTTER: And one man very, very happy.

PRINCESS [*innocently*]: I wonder who he'll be. . . . Woodcutter, if *you* were a Prince, would you be my suitor?

WOODCUTTER [*scornfully*]: One of three?

PRINCESS [*excitedly*]: Oh, would you kill the others? With that axe?

WOODCUTTER: I would not kill them in order to help His Majesty make up his mind about his son-in-law. But if the Princess had made up her mind—and wanted me——

PRINCESS: Yes?

WOODCUTTER: Then I would marry her, however many suitors she had.

PRINCESS: Well, she's only got three at present.

WOODCUTTER: What is that to me?

PRINCESS: Oh, I just thought you might want to be doing something to your axe.

WOODCUTTER: My axe?

PRINCESS: Yes. You see, she *has* made up her mind.

WOODCUTTER [*amazed*]: You mean—— But—but I'm only a woodcutter.

PRINCESS: That's where you'll have the advantage of them when it comes to axes.

WOODCUTTER: Princess! [*He takes her in his arms.*] My Princess!

PRINCESS: Woodcutter! My Woodcutter! My, oh so very slow and uncomprehending, but entirely adorable Woodcutter!

[*They sing together. They just happen to feel like that.*

Our Fairy Story

Duet: Woodcutter and Princess

PRINCESS:

My dear, brown man,
With your strength and grace,
And your most attractive face,
Do you wonder how my love for you began?
Well, I don't quite know,
But with those dear arms around me
I know my fate has found me.

WOODCUTTER:

My own, fair maid,
With all heaven in your eyes,
Are we mad or truly wise
When the laws of courts and kings are disobeyed?
Let the world go by,
With its pride and pomp and glory,
We have made our fairy story.

BOTH:

This is just our fairy story,
Every word of which is true,
Older than the hills around us,
Yet so wonderfully new.

All the stories worth the telling
Surely must be told by two,
Each must have the self-same ending,
" You love me and I love you."

PRINCESS :

My dear, brown man !
Just because I love you blindly
You must rule me very kindly,
For I mean to be obedient—if I can !
I'm a poor spoiled child,
And my future education
Will afford you occupation,
But I recognize my master underneath the toiler's tan.

WOODCUTTER :

My own, fair maid,
I declare your very meekness
Is the measure of my weakness,
And my mastery will seldom be displayed.
For at one shy glance
From beneath those drooping lashes
All my airy kingship crashes.

BOTH : (as before).

WOODCUTTER [*the song finished*] : But what will His Majesty say ?

PRINCESS : All sorts of things. . . . Do you really love me, Woodcutter, or have I proposed to you under a misapprehension ?

WOODCUTTER : I adore you !

PRINCESS [*nodding*] : I thought you did. But I wanted to hear you say it. If I had been a simple peasant, I suppose you would have said it a long time ago ?

WOODCUTTER : I expect so.

PRINCESS [*nodding*] : Yes. . . . Well, now we must think of a plan for making mother like you.

WOODCUTTER : Might I just kiss you again before we begin ?

PRINCESS : Well, I don't quite see how I am to stop you.

[*The* WOODCUTTER *picks her up in his arms and kisses her.*

WOODCUTTER : There !

PRINCESS [*in his arms*] : Oh, Woodcutter, Woodcutter, why didn't you do that the first day I saw you ? Then I needn't have had the bother of proposing to you. [*He puts her down suddenly.*] What is it ?

WOODCUTTER [*listening*] : Somebody coming. [*He peers through the trees and then says in surprise.*] The King !

PRINCESS : Oh ! I must fly !

WOODCUTTER : But you'll come back ?

PRINCESS : Perhaps.

[*She disappears quickly through the trees.*

[*The* WOODCUTTER *goes on with his work, and is discovered at it a minute later by the* KING *and* QUEEN. *The music of " Tête à Tête " is played for the entrance. There enter first one red and one black attendant, walking backwards and bowing to the* KING *and* QUEEN. *They are followed by two other attendants.*

KING [*puffing*] : Ah ! and a seat all ready for us. How satisfying.

[*They sit down, a distinguished couple—reading from left to right, "* KING, QUEEN *"—on a bench outside the* WOODCUTTER'S *hut.*

QUEEN [*crossly—she was like that*] : I don't know why you dragged me here.

KING : As I told you, my love, to be alone.

[*All attendants go off.*

QUEEN : Well, you aren't alone.

[*She indicates the* WOODCUTTER.

KING : Pooh, he doesn't matter. . . . Well now, about

these three Princes. They are getting on my mind rather. It is time we decided which one of them is to marry our beloved child. The trouble is to choose between them.

QUEEN: As regards appetite, there is nothing to choose between them. They are three of the heartiest eaters I have met for some time.

KING: You are right. The sooner we choose one of them, and send the other two about their business, the better. [*Reflectively.*] There were six peaches on the breakfast-table this morning. Did I get one? No.

QUEEN: Did *I* get one? No.

KING: Did our darling get one—not that it matters? No.

QUEEN: It is a pity that the seven-headed bull died last year.

KING [*with a sigh*]: Those days are over. We must think of a new test. Somehow I think that, in a son-in-law, moral worth is even more to be desired than mere brute strength. Now my suggestion is this: that you should disguise yourself as a beggar woman and approach each of the three Princes in turn, supplicating their charity. In this way we shall discover which of the three has the kindest heart. What do you say, my dear?

QUEEN: An excellent plan. If you remember, I suggested it myself yesterday.

KING [*annoyed*]: Well, of course, it had been in my mind for some time. I don't claim that the idea is original; it has often been done in our family. [*Getting up.*] Well then, if you will get ready, my dear, I will go and find our three friends and see that they come this way.

[*They go out together. The music of "Tête à Tête" is played again. As soon as they are out of sight the Princess comes back.*

PRINCESS: Well, Woodcutter, what did I tell you?

WOODCUTTER : What *did* you tell me ?

PRINCESS : Didn't you listen to what they said ?

WOODCUTTER : I didn't listen, but I couldn't help hearing.

PRINCESS : Well, *I* couldn't help listening. And unless you stop it somehow, I shall be married to one of them to-night.

WOODCUTTER : Which one ?

PRINCESS : The one with the kindest heart—whichever that is.

WOODCUTTER : Supposing they all have kind hearts ?

PRINCESS [*confidently*] : They won't. They never have. In our circles when three Princes come together, one of them has a kind heart and the other two haven't. [*Surprised.*] Haven't you read any history at all ?

WOODCUTTER : I have no time for reading. But I think it's time history was altered a little. We'll alter it this afternoon.

PRINCESS : What do you mean ?

WOODCUTTER : Leave this to me. I've got an idea.

PRINCESS [*clapping her hands*] : Oh, how clever of you ! But what do you want me to do ?

WOODCUTTER [*pointing*] : You know the glade over there where the brook runs through it ? Wait for me there.

PRINCESS : I obey my lord's commands.

[*She blows him a kiss and runs off.*

[*The* WOODCUTTER *resumes his work. By-and-by the* RED PRINCE *comes along. He is a—well, you will see for yourself what he is like.*

RED PRINCE : Ah, fellow, . . . Fellow ! . . . I said fellow ! [*Yes, that sort of man.*

WOODCUTTER [*looking up*] : Were you speaking to me, my lord ?

RED PRINCE : There is no other fellow here that I can see.

[*The* WOODCUTTER *looks round to make sure, peers*

behind a tree or two, and comes back to the Prince.

WOODCUTTER : Yes, you must have meant me.

RED PRINCE : Yes, of course I meant you, fellow. Have you seen the Princess come past this way ? I was told she was waiting for me here.

WOODCUTTER : She is not here, my lord. [*Looking round to see that they are alone.*] My lord, are you one of the Princes who is seeking the hand of the Princess ?

RED PRINCE [*complacently*] : I am, fellow.

WOODCUTTER : His Majesty the King was here awhile ago. He is to make his decision between you this afternoon. [*Meaningly.*] I think I can help you to be the lucky one, my lord.

RED PRINCE : You suggest that I take an unfair advantage over my fellow-competitors ?

WOODCUTTER : I suggest nothing, my lord. I only say that I can help you.

RED PRINCE [*magnanimously*] : Well, I will allow you to help me.

WOODCUTTER : Thank you. Then I will give you this advice. If a beggar woman asks you for a crust of bread this afternoon, remember—it is the test !

RED PRINCE [*staggered*] : The test ! But I haven't *got* a crust of bread !

WOODCUTTER : Wait here and I will get you one.

[*He goes into the hut.*

RED PRINCE [*speaking after him as he goes*] : My good fellow, I am extremely obliged to you, and if ever I can do anything for you, such as returning a crust to you of similar size, or even lending you another slightly smaller one, or—— [*The* WOODCUTTER *comes back with the crust.*] Ah, thank you, my man, thank you.

WOODCUTTER : I would suggest, my lord, that you should take a short walk in this direction [*pointing in the opposite direction to that which the* PRINCESS *has*

taken], and stroll back casually in a few minutes' time when the Queen is here.

RED PRINCE : Thank you, my man, thank you.

[*He puts the crust in his pocket and goes off.*

[*The* WOODCUTTER *goes on with his work. The* BLUE PRINCE *comes in and stands watching him in silence for some moments.*

WOODCUTTER [*looking up*] : Hullo !

BLUE PRINCE : Hullo !

WOODCUTTER : What do you want ?

BLUE PRINCE : The Princess.

WOODCUTTER : She's not here.

BLUE PRINCE : Oh !

[*The* WOODCUTTER *goes on with his work and the* PRINCE *goes on looking at him.*

WOODCUTTER [*struck with an idea*] : Are you one of the Princes who is wooing the Princess ?

BLUE PRINCE : Yes.

WOODCUTTER [*coming towards him*] : I believe I could help your Royal Highness.

BLUE PRINCE : Do.

WOODCUTTER [*doubtfully*] : It would perhaps be not quite fair to the others.

BLUE PRINCE : Don't mind.

WOODCUTTER : Well then, listen.

[*He pauses a moment and looks round to see that they are alone.*

BLUE PRINCE : I'm listening.

WOODCUTTER : If you come back in five minutes, you will see a beggar woman sitting here. She will ask you for a crust of bread. You must give it to her, for it is the way His Majesty has chosen of testing your kindness of heart.

BLUE PRINCE [*feeling in his pocket*] : No bread.

WOODCUTTER : I will give you some.

BLUE PRINCE : Do.

WOODCUTTER [*taking a piece from his pocket*] : Here you are.

BLUE PRINCE : Thanks.

WOODCUTTER : Not at all. I'm very glad to have been able to help you.

[*He goes on with his work. The* BLUE PRINCE *remains looking at him.*

BLUE PRINCE [*with a great effort*] : Thanks.

[*He goes slowly away. A moment later the* YELLOW PRINCE *makes a graceful and languid entry.*

YELLOW PRINCE : Ah, come hither, my man, come hither.

WOODCUTTER [*stopping his work and looking up*] : You want me, sir ?

YELLOW PRINCE : Come hither, my man. Tell me, has Her Royal Highness the Princess passed this way lately ?

WOODCUTTER : The Princess ?

YELLOW PRINCE [*slaps* WOODCUTTER'S *shoulder*] : Yes, the Princess, my bumpkin. But perhaps you have been too much concerned in your own earthly affairs to have noticed her. You—ah—cut wood, I see.

WOODCUTTER : Yes, sir, I am a woodcutter.

YELLOW PRINCE : A most absorbing life. Some day we must have a long talk about it. But just now I have other business waiting for me. With your permission, good friend, I will leave you to your fagots.

[*He starts to go.*

WOODCUTTER : Beg your pardon, sir, but are you one of those Princes that want to marry our Princess ?

YELLOW PRINCE : I had hoped, good friend, to obtain your permission to do so. I beg you not to refuse it.

WOODCUTTER : You are making fun of me, sir.

YELLOW PRINCE : Discerning creature.

WOODCUTTER : All the same, I *can* help you.

YELLOW PRINCE : Then pray do so, log-chopper, and earn my everlasting gratitude.

WOODCUTTER : The King has decided that whichever of you three Princes has the kindest heart shall marry his daughter.

YELLOW PRINCE: Then you will be able to bear witness to him that I have already wasted several minutes of my valuable time in condescending to a mere fagot-splitter. Tell him this and the prize is mine. [*Kissing the tips of his fingers.*] Princess, I embrace you.

WOODCUTTER: The King will not listen to me. But if you return here in five minutes, you will find an old woman begging for bread. It is the test which their Majesties have arranged for you. If you share your last crust with her——

YELLOW PRINCE: Yes, but do I look as if I carried a last crust about with me?

WOODCUTTER: But see, I will give you one.

YELLOW PRINCE [*taking it between the tips of his fingers*]: Yes, but——

WOODCUTTER: Put it in your pocket, and when——

YELLOW PRINCE: But, my dear bark-scraper, have you no feeling for clothes at all? How can I put a thing like this in my pocket? [*Handing it back to him.*] I beg you to wrap it up. Here, take this [*gives him a scarf*]. Neatly, I pray you. [*Taking an orange ribbon out of his pocket.*] Perhaps a little of this round it would make it more tolerable. You think so? I leave it to you. I trust your taste entirely. . . . Leaving a loop for the little finger, I entreat you . . . so. [*He hangs it on his little finger.*] In about five minutes, you said? We will be there. [*With a bow.*] We thank you.

[*He departs delicately. The* WOODCUTTER *smiles to himself, puts down his axe and goes off to the* PRINCESS. *And just in time. For behold! the* KING *and* QUEEN *return. The same music as before. At least we think it is the* QUEEN, *but she is so heavily disguised by a cloak which she wears over her Court dress, that for a moment we are not quite sure.*

KING: Now then, my love, if you will sit down on

that log there—[*placing her*]—excellent—I think perhaps you should remove the crown. [*Removes it.*] There! Now the disguise is perfect.

QUEEN: You're sure they are coming? It's a very uncomfortable seat. [*Takes out long nail.*

KING: I told them that the Princess was waiting for them here. Their natural disappointment at finding I was mistaken will make the test of their good-nature an even more exacting one. My own impression is that the Yellow Prince will be the victor.

QUEEN: Oh, I hate that man.

KING [*soothingly*]: Well, well, perhaps it will be the Blue one.

QUEEN: If anything, I dislike him *more* intensely.

KING: Or even the Red.

QUEEN: Ugh! I can't bear him.

KING: Fortunately, dear, you are not called upon to marry any of them. It is for our darling that we are making the great decision. Listen! I hear one coming. I will hide in the cottage and take note of what happens.

[*He disappears into the cottage as the* BLUE PRINCE *comes in.*

QUEEN: Oh, sir, can you kindly spare a crust of bread for a poor old woman! Please, pretty gentleman!

BLUE PRINCE [*standing stolidly in front of her and feeling in his pocket*]: Bread . . . Bread . . . Ah! Bread! [*He offers it.*

QUEEN: Oh, thank you, sir. May you be rewarded for your gentle heart.

BLUE PRINCE: Thank you.

[*He stands gazing at her. There is an awkward pause.*

QUEEN: A blessing on you, sir.

BLUE PRINCE: Thank you. [*He indicates the crust.*] Bread.

QUEEN: Ah, you have saved the life of a poor old woman——

BLUE PRINCE: Eat it.

QUEEN [*embarrassed*] : I—er—you—er——

[*She takes a bite and mumbles something.*

BLUE PRINCE : What ?

QUEEN [*swallowing with great difficulty*] : I'm almost too happy to eat, sir. Leave a poor old woman alone with her happiness, and——

BLUE PRINCE : Not too happy. Too weak. Help you eat. [*He breaks off a piece and holds it to her mouth. With a great effort the* QUEEN *disposes of it.*] Good ! . . . Again ! [*She does it again.*] Now ! [*She swallows another piece.*] Last piece ! [*She takes it in. He pats her kindly on the back and she nearly chokes.*] Good. . . . Better now ?

QUEEN [*weakly*] : Much.

BLUE PRINCE : Good-day.

QUEEN [*with an effort*] : Good-day, kind gentleman.

[*He goes out.*

[*The* KING *is just coming from the cottage, when he returns suddenly. The* KING *slips back again.*

BLUE PRINCE : Small piece left over. [*He gives it to her. She looks hopelessly at him.*] Good-bye.

[*He goes.*

QUEEN [*throwing the piece down violently*] : Ugh ! What a man !

KING [*coming out*] : Well, well, my dear, we have discovered the winner.

QUEEN [*from the heart*] : Detestable person !

KING : The rest of the competition is of course more in the nature of a formality——

QUEEN : Thank goodness.

KING : However, I think that it will prevent unnecessary discussion afterwards if we—— Take care, here is another one. [*He hurries back.*

[*Enter the* RED PRINCE.

QUEEN [*with not nearly so much conviction*] : Could you spare a crust of bread, sir, for a poor hungry old woman ?

RED PRINCE : A crust of bread, madam ? Certainly,

As luck will have it, I have a crust on me. My last one, but—your need is greater than mine. Eat, I pray.

QUEEN : Th-thank you, sir.

RED PRINCE : Not at all. Come, eat. Let me have the pleasure of seeing you eating.

QUEEN : M-might I take it home with me, pretty gentleman ?

RED PRINCE [*firmly*] : No, no. I must see you eating. Come ! I will take no denial.

QUEEN : Th-thank you, sir. [*Hopefully.*] Won't you share it with me ?

RED PRINCE : No, I insist on your having it all. I am in the mood to be generous. Oblige me by eating it now, for I am in a hurry ; yet I will not go until you have eaten. [*She does her best.*] You eat but slowly. [*Sternly.*] Did you deceive me when you said you were hungry ?

QUEEN : N-no. I'm very hungry. [*She eats.*

RED PRINCE : That's better. Now understand—however poor I am, I can always find a crust of bread for an old woman. Always ! Remember this when next you are hungry. . . . You spoke ? [*She shakes her head and goes on eating.*] Finished ?

QUEEN [*with great difficulty*] : Yes, thank you, pretty gentleman.

RED PRINCE : There's a piece on the ground there that you dropped. [*She eats it in dumb agony.*] Finished ?

QUEEN [*huskily*] : Yes, thank you, pretty gentleman.

RED PRINCE : Then I will leave you, madam. Good-morning. [*He goes out.*

[*The* QUEEN *rises in fury. The* KING *is about to come out of the cottage, when the* YELLOW PRINCE *enters. The* QUEEN *sits down again and mumbles something. It is certainly not an appeal for bread, but the* YELLOW PRINCE *is not to be denied.*

YELLOW PRINCE [*gallantly*] : My poor woman, you are

in distress. It pains me to see it, madam, it pains me terribly. Can it be that you are hungry? I thought so, I thought so. Give me the great pleasure, madam, of relieving your hunger. See [*holding up his finger*], my own poor meal. Take it! It is yours.

QUEEN [*with difficulty*]: I am not hungry.

YELLOW PRINCE: Ah, madam, I see what it is. You do not wish to deprive me. You tell yourself, perchance, that it is not fitting that one in your station of life should partake of the meals of the highly born. You are not used, you say, to the food of Princes. Your rougher palate——

QUEEN [*hopefully*]: Did you say the food of Princes?

YELLOW PRINCE: Where was I, madam. You interrupted me. No matter—eat. [*She takes the scarf and unties the ribbon.*] Ah, now I remember. I was saying that your rougher palate——

QUEEN [*discovering the worst*]: No! no! not bread!

YELLOW PRINCE: Bread, madam, the staff of life. Come, madam, will you not eat? [*She tries desperately.*] What can be more delightful than a crust of bread by the wayside?

[*The* QUEEN *shrieks and falls back in a swoon. The* KING *rushes out to her.*

KING [*to* YELLOW PRINCE]: Quick, quick, find the Princess.

YELLOW PRINCE: The Princess—find the Princess!

[*He goes vaguely off and we shall not see him again. But the* WOODCUTTER *and the* PRINCESS *do not need to be found. They are here.*

WOODCUTTER [*to* PRINCESS]: Go to her, but don't show that you know me.

[*He goes into the cottage, and the* PRINCESS *hastens to her father.*

PRINCESS: Father!

KING: Ah, my dear, you're just in time. Your mother——

PRINCESS : My mother ?

KING : Yes, yes. A little plan of mine—of hers—your poor mother. Dear, dear !

PRINCESS : But what's the matter ?

KING : She is suffering from a surfeit of bread, and——

[*The* WOODCUTTER *comes up with a flagon of wine.*

WOODCUTTER : Poor old woman ! She has fainted from exhaustion. Let me give her some——

QUEEN [*shrieking*] : No, no, not bread ! I will ***not*** have any more bread.

WOODCUTTER : Drink this, my poor woman.

QUEEN [*opening her eyes*] : Did you say drink ?

[*She seizes the flagon and drinks.*

PRINCESS : Oh, sir, you have saved my mother's life !

WOODCUTTER : Not at all.

KING : I thank you, my man, I thank you.

QUEEN [*goes to* WOODCUTTER *and flings her arms round him*] : My deliverer ! Tell me who you are !

PRINCESS : It is my mother, the Queen, who asks you.

WOODCUTTER [*amazed, as well as he may be*] : The Queen ! [*Kneels and covers his face.*

KING : Yes, yes. Certainly, the Queen.

WOODCUTTER [*taking off his hat*] : Pardon, your Majesty. I am a woodcutter, who lives alone here, far away from courts.

QUEEN : Well, you've got more sense in your head than any of the Princes that *I've* seen lately. You'd better come to court.

PRINCESS [*shyly*] : You will be very welcome, sir.

QUEEN : And you'd better marry the Princess.

KING : Isn't that perhaps going a *little* too far, dear ?

QUEEN : Well, you wanted kindness of heart in your son-in-law, and you've got it. And he's got common sense too. [*To* WOODCUTTER.] Tell me, what do you think of bread as—as a form of nourishment ?

WOODCUTTER [*cautiously*] : One can have too much of it.

QUEEN : Exactly my view. [*To* KING.] There you are, you see.

KING : Well, if you insist. The great thing, of course, is that our darling child should be happy.

PRINCESS : I will do my best, father.

[*She takes the* WOODCUTTER'S *hand.*

KING : Then the marriage will take place this evening. [*With a wave of his wand.*] Let the revels begin.

[*They begin. Children dance, the refrain of the "Fairy Story" being used. The* KING *and* QUEEN *go off, and the Curtain falls.*

CAMPBELL OF KILMOHR

By J. A. Ferguson

This is the definitive edition of *Campbell of Kilmohr*, with the author's final revisions of the text and his Acting Notes. The correct spelling of the title is that given here
This play is published separately by Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., at 1s. net

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The scene of the play is the Highlands of Scotland, in the winter of the year 1746. *George II was King of England, but in the Highlands many people still believed that the rightful king was Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of James II, who is known in history as the Young Pretender. He had landed in Scotland with seven followers in July* 1745, *gathered his Highland supporters, who were charmed by his gallant and attractive personality, entered Edinburgh, and marched south to within a hundred and twenty miles of London before he was compelled to retreat. He won a victory at Falkirk, but in April* 1746 *his army was overwhelmed at Culloden by the Duke of Cumberland, who had trained his men to meet the terrible charge of the Highlanders. With a reward of* £30,000 *offered for his capture, and armies searching the country for him, Charles Edward became a fugitive in the Highlands; but through all his adventures and hardships and hairbreadth escapes, the bravery of Flora Macdonald and the passionate loyalty of his friends kept him safe, and he escaped to France at the end of the year* 1746. *How loyal his followers were, and how they hated Scotsmen who were on the side of King George, we learn in this play from Mary and Dugald Stewart. They are as determined to save their Prince and his friends, in hiding not far away, as Campbell of Kilmohr is anxious to get the* £30,000 *reward.*

Produced by the Scottish Repertory Theatre Company at the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, on Monday 23rd March 1914, with the following cast :

Mary Stewart . . .	Miss Agnes Lowson
Morag Cameron . . .	Miss Rita Thom
Dugald Stewart . . .	Mr. Nicholas Hannen
Captain Sandeman . .	Mr. N. N. Wimbush
Archibald Campbell . .	Mr. W. S. Hartford
James Mackenzie . .	Mr. C. Stewart Robertson

Scene.—Interior of a lonely cottage on the road from Struan to Rannoch in North Perthshire
Time.—After the Rising of '45

The Play produced by Mr. Lewis Casson

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MORAG *is restlessly moving backwards and forwards. The old woman is seated on a low stool beside the peat fire in the centre of the floor.*

The room is scantily furnished and the women are poorly clad. MORAG *is barefooted. At the back is the door that leads to the outside. On the left of the door is a small window. On the right side of the room there is a door that opens into a barn.* MORAG *stands for a moment at the window, looking out.*

MORAG : It is the wild night outside.

MARY STEWART : Is the snow still coming down ?

MORAG : It is that then—dancing and swirling with the wind too, and never stopping at all. Aye, and so black I cannot see the other side of the road.

MARY STEWART : That is good.

[MORAG *moves across the floor and stops irresolutely. She is restless, expectant.*

MORAG : Will I be putting the light in the window ?

MARY STEWART : Why should you be doing that ! You have not heard his call [*turns eagerly*], have you ?

MORAG [*with sign of head*] : No, but the light in the window would show him all is well.

MARY STEWART : It would not then ! The light was to be put there *after* we had heard the signal.

MORAG : But on a night like this he may have been calling for long and we never hear him.

MARY STEWART : Do not be so anxious, Morag. Keep to what he says. Put more peat on the fire now and sit down.

MORAG [*with increasing excitement*] : I canna, I canna ! There is that in me that tells me something is going to befall us this night. Oh, that wind, hear to it,

sobbing round the house as if it brought some poor lost soul up to the door, and we refusing it shelter.

MARY STEWART : Do not be fretting yourself like that. Do as I bid you. Put more peats to the fire.

MORAG [*at the wicker peat-basket*] : Never since I . . . What was that ? [*Both listen for a moment.*

MARY STEWART : It was just the wind ; it is rising more. A sore night for them that are out in the heather.

[MORAG *puts peat on the fire without speaking.*

MARY STEWART : Did you notice were there many people going by to-day ?

MORAG : No. After daybreak the redcoats came by from Struan ; and there was no more till nine, when an old man like the Catechist from Killichonan passed. At four o'clock, just when the dark was falling, a horseman with a lad holding to the stirrup, and running fast, went by towards Rannoch.

MARY STEWART : But no more redcoats ?

MORAG [*shaking her head*] : The road has been as quiet as the hills, and they as quiet as the grave. Do you think he will come ?

MARY STEWART : Is it you think I have the gift, girl, that you ask me that ? All I know is that it is five days since he was here for meat and drink for himself and for the others—five days and five nights, mind you ; and little enough he took away ; and those in hiding no' used to sore lying I'll be thinking. He must try to get through to-night. But that quietness, with no one to be seen from daylight till dark, I do not like it, Morag. They must know something. They must be watching.

[*A sound is heard by both women. They stand listening.*

MARY STEWART : Haste you with the light, Morag.

MORAG : But it came from the back of the house—from the hillside.

MARY STEWART: Do as I tell you. The other side may be watched.

[*A candle is lit and placed in the window.* MORAG *goes hurrying to the door.*

MARY STEWART: Stop, stop! Would you be opening the door with a light like that shining from the house? A man would be seen against it in the doorway for a mile. And who knows what eyes may be watching? Put out the light now and cover the fire.

[*The room is reduced to semi-darkness, and the door unbarred. Some one enters.*

MORAG: You are cold, Dugald!

[STEWART, *very exhausted, signs assent.*

MORAG: And wet, oh, wet through and through!

STEWART: Erricht Brig was guarded, well guarded. I had to win across the water.

[*The old woman has now relit candle and taken away plaid from fire.*

MARY STEWART: Erricht Brig—then——

STEWART [*nods*]: Yes—in a corrie, on the far side of Dearig, half-way up.

MARY STEWART: Himself is there then?

STEWART: Aye, and Keppoch as well, and another and a greater is with them.

MARY STEWART: Wheest! [*Glances at* MORAG.

STEWART: Mother, is it that you can . . .

MARY STEWART: Yes, yes, Morag will bring out the food for ye to carry back. It is under the hay in the barn, well hid. Morag will bring it. Go, Morag, and bring it.

[MORAG *enters other room or barn which opens on right.*

STEWART: Mother, I wonder at ye; Morag would never tell—never.

MARY STEWART: Morag is only a lass yet. She has never been tried. And who knows what she might be made to tell.

STEWART: Well, well, it is no matter, for I was telling

you where I left them, but not where I am to *find* them.

MARY STEWART : They are not where you said now ?

STEWART : No ; they left the corrie last night, and I am to find them [*whispers*] in a quiet part on Rannoch Moor.

MARY STEWART : It is well for a young lass not to be knowing. Do not tell her.

STEWART : Well, well, I will not tell her. Then she cannot tell where they are even if she wanted to.

[*He sits down at table ; the old woman ministers to his wants.*

STEWART : A fire is a merry thing on a night like this ; and a roof over the head is a great comfort.

MARY STEWART : Ye'll no' can stop the night ?

STEWART : No. I must be many a mile from here before the day breaks on Ben Dearig.

[MORAG *re-enters.*

MORAG : It was hard to get through, Dugald ?

STEWART : You may say that. I came down Erricht for three miles, and then when I reached low country I had to take to walking in the burns because of the snow that shows a man's steps and tells who he is to them that can read ; and there's plenty can do that abroad, God knows.

MORAG : But none spied ye ?

STEWART : Who can tell ? Before dark came, from far up on the slopes of Dearig I saw soldiers down below ; and away towards Rannoch Moor they were scattered all over the country like black flies on a white sheet. A wild-cat or anything that couldna fly could never have got through. And men at every brig and ford and pass ! I had to strike away up across the slopes again ; and even so as I turned round the bend beyond Kilrain I ran straight into a sentry sheltering behind a great rock. But after that it was easy going.

MORAG : How could that be ?

STEWART: Well, you see, I took the boots off him, and then I had no need to mind who might see my steps in the snow.

MORAG: You took the boots off him!

STEWART [*laughing*]: I did that same. Does that puzzle your bonny head? How does a lad take the boots off a redcoat? Find out the answer, my lass, while I will be finishing my meat.

MORAG: Maybe he was asleep?

STEWART: Asleep! Asleep! Well, well, he sleeps sound enough now, with the ten toes of him pointed to the sky.

[*The old woman has taken up dirk from table. She puts it down again.* MORAG *sees the action, and pushes dirk away so that it rolls off the table and drops to the floor. She hides her face in her hands.*

MARY STEWART: Morag, bring in the kebbuck o' cheese. Now that all is well and safe it is we that will look after his comfort to-night. [MORAG *goes into barn.*] I mind well her mother saying to me—it was one day in the black winter that she died, when the frost took the land in its grip and the birds fell stiff from the trees, and the deer came down and put their noses to the door—I mind well her saying just before she died——

[*Loud knocking at the door.*

A VOICE: In the King's name! [*Both rise, startled.*

MARY STEWART [*recovering first*]: The hay in the barn—quick, my son. [*Knocking continues.*

A VOICE: Open in the King's name!

[STEWART *snatches up such articles as would reveal his presence and hurries into barn. He overlooks dirk on floor. The old woman goes towards door, slowly, to gain time.*

MARY STEWART: Who is there. What do you want?

A VOICE: Open, open.

[MARY STEWART *opens door, and* CAMPBELL OF KILMOHR *follows* CAPTAIN SANDEMAN *into the*

house. Behind KILMOHR *comes a man carrying a leather wallet,* JAMES MACKENZIE, *his clerk. The rear is brought up by soldiers carrying arms.*

SANDEMAN : Ha, the bird has flown.

CAMPBELL [*who has struck dirk with his foot and picked it up*] : But the nest is warm ; look at this.

SANDEMAN : It seems as if we had disturbed him at supper. Search the house, men.

MARY STEWART : I'm just a lonely old woman. You have been misguided. I was getting through my supper.

CAMPBELL [*holding up dirk*] : And this was your toothpick, eh ? Na, na ! We ken whaur we are, and wha we want, and, by Cruachan, I think we've got him.

[*Sounds are heard from barn, and soldiers return with* MORAG. *She has stayed in hiding from fear, and she still holds the cheese in her hands.*

SANDEMAN : What have we here !

CAMPBELL : A lass !

MARY STEWART : It's just my dead brother's daughter. She was getting me the cheese, as you can see.

CAMPBELL : On men, again : the other turtle-doo will no' be far away. [*Bantering, to the old woman.*] Tut, tut, Mistress Stewart, and do ye have her wait upon ye while your leddyship dines alane ! A grand way to treat your dead brother's daughter ; fie, fie, upon ye !

[*Soldiers reappear with Stewart, whose arms are pinioned.*

CAMPBELL : Did I no' tell ye ! And this, Mrs. Stewart, will be your dead sister's son, I'm thinking ; or aiblins your leddyship's butler ! Weel, woman, I'll tell ye this : Pharaoh spared ae butler, but Erchie Campbell will no spare anither. Na ! na ! Pharaoh's case is no' to be taken as forming ony preceedent. And so if he doesna answer

aiblins, perhaps

certain questions we have to speir at him, before morning he'll hang as high as Haman.

[STEWART *is placed before the table at which* CAMPBELL *has seated himself. Two soldiers guard* STEWART. *Another is behind* CAMPBELL'S *chair and another is by the door. The clerk,* MACKENZIE, *is seated at up corner of table.* SANDEMAN *stands by the fire.*

CAMPBELL [*to* STEWART] : Weel, sir, it is within the cognizance of the law that you have knowledge and information of the place of harbour and concealment used by certain persons who are in a state of proscription. Furthermore, it is known that four days ago certain other proscribed persons did join with these, and that they are banded together in an endeavour to secure the escape from these dominions of His Majesty, King George, of certain persons who by their crimes and treasons lie open to the capital charge. What say ye ?

[STEWART *makes no reply.*

CAMPBELL : Ye admit this then ?

[STEWART *as before.*

CAMPBELL : Come, come, my lad. Ye stand in great jeopardy. Great affairs of state lie behind this which are beyond your simple understanding. Speak up, and it will be the better for ye.

[STEWART *silent as before.*

CAMPBELL : Look you. I'll be frank with you. No harm will befall you this night (and I wish all in this house to note my words)—no harm will befall you this night if you supply the information required.

[STEWART *as before.*

CAMPBELL [*with sudden passion*] : Sandeman, put your sword to the carcass o' this muckle ass and see will it louse his tongue.

[SANDEMAN *does not move.*

STEWART : It may be as well then, Mr. Campbell, that

speir, ask *muckle*, great

I should say a word to save your breath. It is this : Till you talk Rannoch Loch to the top of Schiehallion ye'll no' talk me into a yea or nay.

CAMPBELL [*quietly*] : Say ye so ? Noo, I wadna be so very sure if I were you. I've had a lairge experience o' life, and speaking out of it I would say that only fools and the dead never change their minds.

STEWART [*quietly too*] : Then you'll be adding to your experience to-night, Mr. Campbell, and you'll have something to put on to the other side of it.

CAMPBELL [*tapping his snuff-box*] : Very possibly, young sir, but what I would present for your consideration is this : While ye may be prepared to keep your mouth shut under the condition of a fool, are ye equally prepared to do so in the condition of a dead man ?

[CAMPBELL *waits expectantly.* STEWART *silent as before.*

CAMPBELL : Tut, tut, now if it's afraid ye are, my lad, with my hand on my heart and on my word as a gentleman . . .

STEWART : Afraid !

[*He spits in contempt towards* CAMPBELL.

CAMPBELL [*enraged*] : Ye damned stubborn Hieland stot . . . [*To* SANDEMAN] Have him taken out. We'll get it another way.

[CAMPBELL *rises.* STEWART *is moved into barn by soldiers, who remain with him.*

CAMPBELL [*walking*] : Some puling eediots, Sandeman, would applaud this contumacy and call it constancy. Constancy ! Now, I've had a lairge experience o' life, and I never saw yet a sensible man insensible to the touch of yellow metal. If there may be such a man, it is demonstrable that he is no sensible man. Fideelity ! quotha, it's sheer obstinacy. They just see that ye want something oot o' them, and they're so damned selfish and

stot, bullock

thrawn they winna pairt. And with the natural inabeelity o' their brains to hold mair than one idea at a time, they canna see that in return you could put something into their palms far more profitable. [*Sits again at table.*] Aweel, bring Mistress Stewart up.

[*Old woman is placed before him where son had been.*

CAMPBELL [*more ingratiatingly*] : Weel noo, Mistress Stewart, good woman, this is a sair predeecament for ye to be in. I would jist counsel ye to be candid. Doubtless yer mind is a' in a swirl. Ye kenna what way to turn. Maybe ye are like the Psalmist and say : " I lookit this way and that, and there was no man to peety me, or to have compassion upon my fatherless children." But, see now, ye would be wrong ; and, if ye tell me a' ye ken, I'll stand freends wi' ye. Put your trust in Erchie Campbell.

MARY STEWART : I trust no Campbell.

CAMPBELL : Weel, weel, noo, I'm no' jist that set up wi' them myself. There's but ae Campbell that I care muckle aboot, after a'. But, good wife, it's no' the Campbells we're trying the noo ; so, as time presses, we'll jist *birze yont,* as they say themselves. Noo then, speak up. [MARY STEWART *is silent.*

CAMPBELL [*beginning grimly and, passing through astonishment, expostulation, and a feigned contempt for mother and pity for son, to a pretence of sadness which, except at the end, makes his words come haltingly*] : Ah ! ye also. I suppose ye understand, woman, how it will go wi' your son ? [*To his clerk.*] Here's a fine mother for ye, James ! Would you believe it ? She kens what would save her son—the very babe she nursed at her breast ; but will she save him ? Na ! na ! Sir, he may look after himself ! A mother, a mother ! Ha ! ha !

[CAMPBELL *laughs.* MACKENZIE *titters foolishly.* CAMPBELL *pauses to watch effect of his words.*

kenna, know not *birze yont,* press forward

Aye, you would think, James, that she would remember the time when he was but little and afraid of all the terrors that walk in darkness, and how he looked up to her as to a tower of safety, and would run to her with outstretched hands, hiding his face from his fear, in her gown. The darkness! It is the dark night and a long journey before him now. [*He pauses again.*

You would think, James, that she would mind how she happit him from the cold of winter and sheltered him from the summer heats, and, when he began to find his footing, how she had an eye on a' the beasts of the field, and on the water and the fire that were become her enemies. And to what purpose all this care?—tell me that, my man, to what good, if she is to leave him at the last to dangle from a tree at the end of a hempen rope—to see his flesh to be meat for the fowls of the air—her son, her little son!

MARY STEWART [*softly*]: My son—my little son! . . . Oh, [*more loudly*] but my son he has done no crime.

CAMPBELL: Has he no'? Weel, mistress, as ye'll no' take my word for it, maybe ye'll list to Mr. Mackenzie here. What say ye, James?

MACKENZIE: He is guilty of aiding and abetting in the concealment of proscribed persons; likewise with being found in the possession of arms, contrary to statute, both very heinous crimes.

CAMPBELL: Very well said, James! Forby, between ourselves, Mrs. Stewart, the young man in my opeenion is guilty of another crime [*snuffs*]—he is guilty of the heinous crime of not knowing on which side his bread is buttered. Come now. . . .

MARY STEWART: Ye durst not lay a finger on the lad, ye durst not hang him.

MACKENZIE: And why should the gentleman not hang him if it pleesure him?

[CAMPBELL *taps snuff-box and takes pinch.*

happit, covered ***forby***, besides

MARY STEWART [*with intensity*]: Campbell of Kilmohr, lay but one finger on Dugald Stewart and the weight of Ben Cruachan will be light to the weight that will be laid on your soul. I will lay the curse of the seven rings upon your life. I will call up the fires of Ephron, the blue and the green and the grey fires, for the destruction of your soul. I will curse you in your homestead and in the wife it shelters, and in the children that will never bear your name. Yea and ye shall be cursed.

CAMPBELL [*startled, betrays agitation—the snuff is spilt from his trembling hand*]: Hoot toot, woman! ye're, ye're . . . [*Angrily.*] Ye auld beldame, to say such things to me! I'll have ye first whippit and syne droont for a witch. Damn thae stubborn and supersteetious cattle! [*To* SANDEMAN.] We should have come in here before him and listened in the barn, Sandeman!

SANDEMAN [*in quick staccato, always cool*]: Ah, listen behind the door you mean! Now I never thought of that!

CAMPBELL: Did ye not! Humph! Well, no doubt there are a good many things in the universe that yet wait for your thought upon them. What would be your objections, now?

SANDEMAN: There are two objections, Kilmohr, that you would understand.

CAMPBELL: Name them.

SANDEMAN: Well, in the first place, we have not wings like crows to fly . . . and the footsteps on the snow. . . . Second point: the woman would have told him we were there.

CAMPBELL: Not if I told her I had the power to clap her in Inverness jail.

MARY STEWART [*in contempt*]: Yes, even if ye had told me ye had power to clap me in hell, Mr. Campbell.

syne droont, then drowned

CAMPBELL: Lift me that screeching Jezebel oot o' here; Sandeman, we'll mak' a quick finish o' this. [*Soldiers take her towards barn.*] No, not there, pitch the old girzie into the snow.

MARY STEWART [*as she is led outside*]: Ye'll never find him, Campbell, never, never!

CAMPBELL [*enraged*]: Find him, aye, by God I'll find him, if I have to keek under every stone on the mountains from the Boar of Badenoch to the Sow of Athole. [*Old woman and soldiers go outside, leaving only* CAMPBELL, MACKENZIE, SANDEMAN, *and* MORAG *in the room; Morag huddled up on stool.*] And now, Captain Sandeman, you an' me must have a word or two. I noted your objection to listening ahint doors and so on. Now, I make a' necessary allowances for youth and the grand and magneeficent ideas commonly held, for a little while, in that period. I had them myself. But, man, gin ye had trod the floor of the Parliament Hoose in Edinburry as long as I did, wi' a pair o' thin hands at the bottom o' toom pockets, ye'd ha'e shed your fine notions, as I did. Noo, fine pernickety noansense will no' do in this business——

SANDEMAN: Sir!

CAMPBELL: Softly, softly, Captain Sandeman, and hear till what I have to say. I have noticed with regret several things in your remarks and bearing which are displeasing to me. I would say just one word in your ear; it is this: These things, Sandeman, are not conducive to advancement in His Majesty's service.

SANDEMAN [*after a brief pause in which the two eye each other*]: Kilmohr, I am a soldier, and if I speak out my mind you must pardon me if my words are blunt: I do not like this work, but I *loathe* your methods.

CAMPBELL: Mislike the methods you may, but the

girzie, noisy woman *toom*, empty

work ye must do! Methods are my business. Let me tell you the true position. In ae word it is no more and no less than this. You and me are baith here to carry out the proveesions of the Act for the Pacification of the Highlands. That means the cleaning up of a very big mess, Sandeman, a very big mess. Now, what is your special office in this work? I'll tell ye, man; you and your men are just beesoms in the hands of the law-officers of the Crown. In this district, I order and ye soop. [*He indicates door of barn.*] Now soop, Captain Sandeman.

SANDEMAN: What are you after? I would give something to see into your mind.

CAMPBELL: Ne'er fash aboot my mind: what has a soldier to do with ony mental operations? It's His Grace's orders that concern you. Oot wi' your man and set him up against the wa'.

SANDEMAN: Kilmohr, it is murder—murder, Kilmohr!

CAMPBELL: Hoots awa', man, it's a thing o' nae special signeeficence.

SANDEMAN: I must ask you for a warrant.

CAMPBELL: Quick, then: Mackenzie will bring it out to you.

[*Clerk begins writing as* SANDEMAN *goes and orders the soldiers to lead* STEWART *outside.* CAMPBELL *sits very still and thoughtful. Clerk finishes writing and places warrant before* CAMPBELL *for his signature.*

MACKENZIE: At this place, sir.

CAMPBELL [*again alert*]: Hoots, I was forgetting.

MACKENZIE: It is a great power ye have in your hands, Kilmohr, to be able to send a man to death on the nod, as ye might say.

CAMPBELL [*sitting back, pen in hand*]: Power! power say ye? Man, do ye no' see I've been beaten. Do ye no' see that? Archibald Campbell and a' his

men and his money are less to them than the wind blowing in their faces.

MACKENZIE : Well, it's a strange thing that.

CAMPBELL [*throwing down the pen and rising*] : Aye, it's a strange thing that. It's a thing fit to sicken a man against the notion that there are probabilities on this earth. . . . Ye see, James, beforehand I would have said nothing could be easier.

MACKENZIE : Than to get them to tell ?

CAMPBELL : Aye, just that. But you heard what he said : " You'll be adding to your experience this night, Mr. Campbell, and you'll have something to put to the other side of it," says he. [*Paces away, hands behind back.*] Aye, and I have added something to it, a thing I like but little. [*Turning to face* MACKENZIE *with raised hand.*] Do you see what it is, James ? A dream can be stronger than a strong man armed. Just a whispered word, a pointed finger even, would ha'e tell'd us a'. But no ! no ! And so I am powerless before the visions and dreams of an old woman and a half-grown lad.

MACKENZIE [*who now stands waiting for the warrant*] : No' exactly powerless, Kilmohr, for if ye canna open his mouth ye can shut it ; and there's some satisfaction in that.

CAMPBELL [*sitting down to sign warrant*] : No' to me, man, no' to me. [*He hands the paper to* MACKENZIE, *who goes out.*] For I've been beaten. Aye, the pair o' them have beat me, though it's only a matter o' seconds till one o' them be dead.

MORAG [*her voice coming quickly, in a sharp whisper, like an echo of* CAMPBELL'S *last word as she sits up to stare at him*] : Dead !

CAMPBELL [*startled*] : What is that ?

MORAG [*slowly*] : Is he dead ?

CAMPBELL [*aloud*] : Oh, it's you. I'd forgotten you were there.

MORAG [*in same tone*] : Is he dead ?

CAMPBELL [*grimly*]: Not yet. But if ye'll look through this window preesently ye'll see him gotten ready for death.

[*He picks up hat, gloves, cloak, and is about to go out.*

MORAG [*after a pause, very slowly and brokenly*]: I—will—tell—you.

CAMPBELL [*astounded*]: What!

MORAG: I will tell you all you are seeking to know.

CAMPBELL [*in a whisper, thunderstruck*]: God, and to think, to think I was on the very act . . . on the very act of . . . [*Recovering.*] Tell me—tell me at once.

MORAG: You will promise that he will not be hanged?

CAMPBELL: He will not. I swear it.

MORAG: You will give him back to me?

CAMPBELL: I will give him back—unhung.

MORAG: Then [CAMPBELL *comes near*], in a corrie half-way up the far side of Dearig—God save me!

CAMPBELL [*in exultation*]: Dished after a'. I've clean dished them! Loard, Loard! [*With intense solemnity, clasping hands and looking upwards.*] Once more I can believe in the rationality of Thy world. [*Gathers up again his cloak, hat, etc.*] And to think . . . to think . . . I was on the very act of going away like a beaten dog!

MORAG: He is safe from hanging now?

CAMPBELL [*chuckles and looks out at window before replying, and is at door when he speaks*]: Very near it, very near it. Listen!

[*He holds up his hand—a volley of musketry is heard.*

KILMOHR *goes out, leaving door wide open. After a short interval of silence, the old woman enters and advances a few steps towards the girl, who has sunk on her knees at the volley.*

MARY STEWART: Did you hear, Morag Cameron, did you hear?

[*The girl is sobbing, her face covered by her hands.*

MARY STEWART: Och! be quiet now. I would be

listening till the last sound of it passes into the great hills and over all the wide world. . . . It is fitting for you to be crying, a child that cannot understand, but water shall never wet eye of mine for Dugald Stewart. Last night I was but the mother of a lad that herded sheep on the Athole hills : this morn it is I that am the mother of a man who is among the great ones of the earth. All over the land they will be telling of Dugald Stewart. Mothers will teach their children to be men by him. High will his name be with the teller of fine tales. . . . The great men came, they came in their pride, terrible like the storm they were, and cunning with the words of guile were they. Death was with them. . . . He was but a lad, a young lad, with great length of days before him, and the grandeur of the world. But he put it all from him. " Speak," said they, " speak, and life and great riches will be for yourself." But he said no word at all ! Loud was the swelling of their wrath ! Let the heart of you rejoice, Morag Cameron, for the snow is red with his blood. There are things greater than death. Let them that are children shed the tears. . . .

[*She comes forward and lays her hand on the girl's shoulder.*

MARY STEWART : Let us go and lift him into the house and not be leaving him lie out there alone.

CURTAIN

MICHAEL

By Miles Malleson

Michael was first produced by the students of the Academy of Dramatic Art on Tuesday 3rd April 1917, at the St. James's Theatre, with the following cast :

SIMON	Miss Phyllis Hiller
MATRYONA	Miss Joan Allen
ANIUSKA	Miss Noreen Price
MICHAEL	Miss Gabrielle Clay
A RUSSIAN NOBLE	Miss Kitty Penberthy
HIS SERVANT	Miss Phyllis Fenton
A WOMAN	Miss Molly Wood
TWO CHILDREN	Miss May Taylor Miss Ellen Bird

The play is adapted from the translation by L. and A. Maude of Tolstoy's story, *What Men Live By*

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MICHAEL

SCENE I

A Russian peasant hut. The door into the open air is in the centre of the back wall; there is another door into an inner room on the right as one looks on to the stage. The fireplace is opposite on the left, with a rough wooden bench by it. The room is barely furnished. There is a wooden table and a few wooden stools. On the table are a few tattered clothes and some sewing materials.

An empty stage at the rise of the curtain. A peasant woman enters from out of doors carrying a water-pail. She crosses to look into the inner room, evidently finds it empty, and calls.

MATRYONA: Aniuska . . . Aniuska! [*A child's voice answers from outside in a loud happy Oo . . . ee. The woman crosses to the door and calls out into the open.*] Bring in those sticks you gathered, Aniuska; bring them in for the fire. Now. Now, at once.

[*She returns to the fireplace and for a moment busies herself there. An enormous collection of sticks makes its appearance at the door. The collection begins to advance into the room uneasily and uncannily, and apparently on two little bare feet of its own. However, a child is seen to be supplying the motive power. The sticks are deposited by the fireplace.*

MATRYONA: Now make up the fire with them, Aniuska. Your father will be back soon from the town.

[*The child squats on the floor and begins to break up the sticks. The little ones are easy enough, but*

she has some hard tussles with the stouter ones. She is busy thus through the following scene. MATRYONA *seats herself at the table and begins to patch a very ragged shirt.*

ANIUSKA : Woof ! [*A stick is broken at that.*] Mummy —woof——

MATRYONA : Yes ?

ANIUSKA : Woof ! Why has Daddy gone into the town ?

MATRYONA : To buy a warm sheepskin for the winter. We've only one between us, and that's worn to tatters.

ANIUSKA : Woof ! Why doesn't Daddy—woof !—go into the town and buy warm sheepskins more often . . . woof ! . . . I can't ever remember Daddy having been away for the whole day before. . . .

MATRYONA : There's never a moment to be spared from his work.

ANIUSKA : Woof !

MATRYONA : Work's cheap, but bread's dear ; and what he earns goes on food ; there's little use tramping many weary miles to the town with no money to spend.

ANIUSKA : Woof ! . . . Has Daddy got some money now ?

MATRYONA : Little enough. It's taken a year—day in and day out, making boots for the neighbours, to save enough for one sheepskin. And he's got to collect most of it on his way to the town.

ANIUSKA : Who's he going to collect it from ?

MATRYONA : From the neighbours he's made boots for, silly. [MATRYONA *continues musing half to herself and half to the child.*] If only the dealer doesn't cheat him—he's much too simple—he cheats nobody, but any child can take him in . . . eight roubles is a lot of money. He should get a good coat at that price. Not tanned skin, but still, a

rouble, a coin which was then worth about half-a-crown

proper winter coat. It'll be better this winter than last. When he went out he put on our one coat, and I had to stay indoors.

ANIUSKA [*after a tremendous but vain struggle with a too thick piece of stick*] : Nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty ! I can't " woof " it !

MATRYONA : Tell me how much bread there is, Aniuska. . . . He'll be wanting something when he comes back. [*The child goes to a cupboard and holds up a piece of bread.*] That'll have to do. He'll have had some dinner in the town. Set it out, Aniuska. [*She takes her sewing from the table to the bench by the fire.* ANIUSKA *sets out the bread and a bowl or two, dancing and skipping to and fro between the table and the cupboard—singing a little to herself.* MATRYONA *continues.*] He didn't start very early. It's a long way, and he had to collect the money on his way, but it's time he was back—I only hope he hasn't gone on the spree.

ANIUSKA [*having set out her father's meal, she has gone to the door. Suddenly*] : Here he comes ! Here comes Daddy ! [*In tremendous excitement she rushes to her mother and then back to the door to run out to meet him ; but instead, she stops short.*] Daddy isn't alone. There's somebody with him.

MATRYONA : What's that ? What sort of a person with him ? [*She puts away her work.*

ANIUSKA : He must be terribly cold, his arms are all bare, and his feet . . . He looks like a beggar.

MATRYONA : A beggar !

ANIUSKA : No. He doesn't look like a beggar.

MATRYONA : Has your father a sheepskin ?

ANIUSKA : No.

MATRYONA : No sheepskin ! [*She hurries to the door.*] No sheepskin ! Nothing ! And bringing a beggar home with him. It's as I feared. He's been on the spree. It's vodka the money's gone on, and

vodka, an intoxicating drink, distilled from rye

not a sheepskin. [*Her temper begins to rise quickly.*] Here's a nice end to a year's work. My heart could break with disappointment. A year's savings on a drunken spree. [*She vents her rising anger on the child.*] Get off to bed!

ANIUSKA [*extremely plaintive*]: I want to see Daddy.

MATRYONA: Off with you! You don't see your father drunk—and you don't hear what I've got to say to him! Off with you!

ANIUSKA [*her voice quivering with tears*]: I haven't seen Daddy all day.

MATRYONA: Off with you—and put yourself into your bed. [ANIUSKA, *her knuckles stuffed into her eyes in an ineffectual attempt to keep back her tears, goes slowly into the inner room.* MATRYONA *shuts the door after her, and then shuts the door into the open air. She begins to work herself up into a passionate indignation.*] Oh, it's a nice end to it. One slaves and slaves and slaves, and the money goes on drink, and he brings his good-for-nothing drunken friends home with him. Well, we shall see! [*She takes up her stand by the fireplace and waits. The door is opened.* SIMON *comes in. He holds the door open for some one else.*

SIMON: Come in, friend. . . . Come in.

[*A young man, apparently of about eighteen, enters. His face is beautiful and his bare limbs wonderfully shaped. Just a piece of coarse material wound round him, and* SIMON'S *old cloak across his shoulders, keep out the cold as best they may. Having entered, he stands just inside the door, his head and eyes lowered.* SIMON *is not at all the worse for drink, but evidently very anxious about his reception by his wife.*

SIMON: Well, Mother? [*She does not answer.*] Come, friend. Here by the fire. Sit and warm yourself. [*He sets the bench nearer to the fire, and beckons the stranger to it.*] There! That's better than the

snow outside! We'll have some supper. Any supper for us, Mother?

MATRYONA: You shall have your supper when I have my sheepskin.

SIMON: Oh, come, Mother—that's a poor welcome! I couldn't get the skin.

MATRYONA: Why not?

SIMON: I called on neighbour Trifonof on my way to the town, but he couldn't pay me what he owed. He hadn't the money. Hardly enough bread for his wife and children. I couldn't force him. I went on and asked the dealers to let me have a skin on credit, but they wouldn't—so we must go without.

MATRYONA: Where's the money that you started with?

SIMON: Here. [*He gives her some.*

MATRYONA [*counting it*]: It's not all.

SIMON: I spent some.

MATRYONA: On what?

SIMON: On vodka.

MATRYONA: So! That's what I thought.

SIMON: Just enough to keep out the cold. Many miles through the snow—like this—it's cold work . . . and hungry work, too.

MATRYONA: There's no supper for drunkards like you.

SIMON: Now then, Mother.

MATRYONA: Maybe the cold's sobered you. But you set out to buy a sheepskin, and you come back with nothing but a naked vagabond.

SIMON: That's enough, Matryona. Don't wag your tongue without reason. . . .

MATRYONA: And you ask for supper! As if nothing had happened. There's only enough bread in the house for a day—we can't feed all the drunkards in the country.

SIMON: There now, Matryona, hold your tongue.

MATRYONA: Hold my tongue indeed! Yes. I've finished with you. You expect me to slave for

another year, do you? Then you can get your own supper—and mind your own house. . . . Here, give that to me! [*She seizes the cloak from the stranger's shoulders and throws it round her. She goes to the door, but neither her husband nor the stranger move, and her curiosity is roused. She comes back and addresses the stranger.*] If you haven't been on a drunken spree, how came you like that? [*No answer.*] You must be a bad man—you're afraid. [*No answer; and she draws a little nearer to him.*] You're clothed like a beggar, but your skin is white and your hands are smooth. . . . Where do you come from? . . . What do you want? [*The stranger shakes his head.*] Haven't you a tongue in your head?

SIMON: He hasn't spoken a word since I found him.

MATRYONA: Found him? Where did you find him?

SIMON: By the roadside. I was passing a shrine at a bend of the road, and I saw something on the ground against it, and when I went closer I found him—naked in the snow. I thought some one must have stripped him and left him there, and if I meddled I should get into trouble—so I hurried on. . . . And then I thought he might be dying of cold and want, and I was slipping past—afraid! "Simon," I said to myself, "have you grown so rich as to be afraid of robbers? Shame on you!" So I went back, and lifted him up, and put my cloak round him and brought him home. I questioned him, but he never spoke. . . . And now you know as much as I.

[MATRYONA *regards him still more curiously*

MATRYONA: His skin's as white and soft as a nobleman's. In the snow, like that! It's a wonder he's alive! Well, we can't let him starve. Here! Out of my way! [*Her voice is kinder. She wishes to reach a kettle on the fire.*] Here . . . sit here. You'll be warmer here. [*She sets a chair for him nearer*

the fire so that she can reach the kettle. His back is now to the audience. She fills a cup and gives it to him.] There. Drink that. That'll warm you. [*He looks up at her when he takes it; and suddenly drawing a little back, she stares at him. As if spell-bound and unable to take her eyes from the stranger she gets closer to* SIMON. *Her voice is full of awed fear.*] Did you see. . . . Simon . . . did you see?

SIMON: What was there to see, Mother?

MATRYONA: When I handed him the cup, he smiled at me. The strangest smile I've ever seen! I've never seen a man smile like that. He smiled as if the sun were behind his eyes. Simon, I'm afraid. . . . I'm afraid of him . . . there's something very strange.

SIMON: Strange or not—as you say, we can't let him starve. Give him the bread.

MATRYONA: You.

SIMON: Here, friend, take this.

[SIMON *gives him the bread. For a moment they both watch him. Then:*

MATRYONA: And that's the last food in the house, and you'll be wanting some. Perhaps I can borrow a little from neighbour Martha—I'll go across now. [*By the door she hesitates.*] It's very dark. The stranger's put a spell on me—I'm fearing to go across the black field. . . . Come with me, Simon. He'll be well enough for a while. [SIMON *joins her at the door.*] We'd best take the lantern.

SIMON: No, Mother. We know every step of the way. . . . Take my hand.

[*They go out together. The stranger sits silent on the bench. From the inner room the child's voice calls:*

ANIUSKA: Mother . . . Mother . . . Daddy . . . Dad-*dy* . . .

[*The child appears in a tiny little white shirt; she peeps out into the room. Then she advances into*

it. When she sees the stranger, she observes him in surprised silence. Slowly she crosses the room to him. He looks up, and she stands taking him in with a solemn, fearless curiosity. She accepts him and gives him a hand, which he takes. Then, climbing up on to his lap, she rests her head contentedly against his shoulder. The stage becomes black.

SCENE II

In a few moments it is light again.
The same Scene. A year has elapsed. SIMON *sits shoemaking.* MATRYONA *is sewing.*

MATRYONA : Simon.
SIMON : Yes, Mother ?
MATRYONA : Do you know what to-day is ?
SIMON : No. What is to-day ?
MATRYONA : It's a year ago since you brought Michael home.
SIMON : The luckiest day's work I ever did. Never did I know a man take so readily to his work, or so easy to teach as Michael. And now no one sews boots so neatly and strongly in all the district. His fame is beginning to spread, too. People are coming a long way to have their boots sewn here. We shall soon be well off.
MATRYONA : And yet from that day to this, he's still as great a mystery as ever. Where is he now ?
SIMON : He's but taken some boots to a neighbour.
MATRYONA : It's seldom his bench there is empty. He seems to work without stopping—silently. It is strange. He only speaks when necessary, and he does not joke nor laugh. And—except once, except that once—I have never seen him smile. Do you know, Father, I often think something very strange will happen, and we shall lose him.

SIMON: God put off the day! He's too good a workman.

[*The door opens, and* MICHAEL *in peasant dress appears. He comes in, and going silently to his bench, begins to work. They have only worked a few moments when the bells of a carriage-sledge are heard outside.* MATRYONA *goes at once to the door.*

MATRYONA: Oh, what a carriage! And beautiful horses, and servants! It must belong to a great nobleman . . . it's stopping . . . the servants are getting down . . . the nobleman! . . . he's getting out . . . he's coming here. [*She shuts the door in alarm.*] Simon, a great nobleman is coming up our pathway.

[SIMON *rises, and they wait anxiously.* MICHAEL *works on unconcerned. There is an imperious knock at the door.* MATRYONA *opens it timidly. A magnificently dressed noble swaggers in.*

NOBLEMAN: Are you the master bootmaker?

SIMON: I am, your Excellency.

NOBLEMAN [*calling from the door*]: Fedka, bring the leather. . . . [*A servant runs in with some leather.*] Give it to me. . . . Look here, shoemaker. Do you see this leather?

SIMON: Yes, your Excellency.

NOBLEMAN: Do you know what sort of leather it is?

SIMON: It is good leather.

NOBLEMAN: Good indeed! Why, you fool, you never saw such leather before in your life. It's foreign. It cost me twenty roubles.

SIMON [*aghast*]: Twenty roubles! Where should I ever see leather like that?

NOBLEMAN: Just so. Now, can you make it into boots for me?

SIMON: Yes, your Excellency, I can.

NOBLEMAN: You can, can you? Well, remember whom you are to make them for, and what the

leather is. You must make me boots that will wear for a year, neither losing shape nor coming unsewn. If you can do it, take the leather and cut it up—but if you can't, you'd better say so. I warn you now, if you spoil my leather, I will have you put in prison.

SIMON : Your Excellency !

NOBLEMAN : But if you make good boots, as I want them, I will pay you ten roubles for your work. Will you do it ?

SIMON : Ten roubles. . . .

NOBLEMAN : Ten roubles. . . . Well ?

SIMON : . . . Yes, your Excellency, I will do it.

NOBLEMAN : Very well. Take my measure. [*The* NOBLEMAN *sits so that his own servant can remove one of his boots.* SIMON *begins to take the measure.*] Mind you don't make it too tight !

SIMON : No, your Excellency.

[ANIUSKA *comes skipping, bounding, shouting into the room, unaware of the* NOBLEMAN.

MATRYONA [*terrified that such a hullabaloo will annoy the* NOBLEMAN.] Aniuska !

[*The child sees the* NOBLEMAN, *is overcome, and creeps to hide her head in her mother's skirts.*

NOBLEMAN : Is that yours ?

MATRYONA : Yes, your Excellency.

[*The measure has been taken, and the* NOBLEMAN *rises.*

NOBLEMAN : There ! And take care, for your own sake, my leather is not spoiled. [*He notices* MICHAEL *who has been working unconcerned.*] Whom have we here ?

SIMON : That is my workman—he will sew the boots.

NOBLEMAN : Oh, he will sew them, will he ? [*He swaggers across to* MICHAEL.] Mind ! Remember to make them so that they will last a year. They must neither lose shape nor come unsewn.

[MICHAEL *rises slowly from his seat. His back is to*

the audience. He stands gazing towards the NOBLEMAN. MATRYONA *seizes* SIMON *by the arm.*

MATRYONA [*whispering*]: Simon! Look! Look at Michael! Michael's face! He's smiling!

SIMON [*under his breath*]: God protect us!

MATRYONA: . . . As he did when he looked at me a year ago.

NOBLEMAN [*in loud uneasiness*]: . . . What are you grinning at, you fool? Stop! Stop grinning! [*He advances to him threateningly; but as* MICHAEL *does not move, the* NOBLEMAN *hesitates, then turns to the door.*] Instead of standing there smiling, if you take my advice you'll sew my boots as I want them, and earn ten roubles for your master. But if the leather's spoiled, you grinning fool, there's prison for you as well as him. Come, Fedka.

[*The* NOBLEMAN *and his servant go out.* MICHAEL *stands unmoving, and* SIMON *and his wife watch him, strangely fascinated.*

SIMON [*recalled by the leather*]: It's wonderful leather. You must cut it, Michael—and take care how you cut. If the leather's spoilt, it's ruin for us all. There! [*He gives him the leather with the greatest care.*] Wait now till I give you the measure. [*He turns to fetch the measure.*] Your eye is truer than mine—you must cut as you never cut before, and cut exact.

[*But without waiting for the measure* MICHAEL *folds the leather and cuts it boldly into two pieces.*

SIMON [*in a terrible state*]: Michael! For God's sake! What have you done? [MICHAEL *deliberately cuts it again.*] The leather's spoiled. O God! We're ruined! We shall be taken off to the prison! Matryona, Aniuska—little one—our home will be broken up!—the nobleman will be enraged, and we shall be helpless against him. . . . Michael, never before have you made a mistake, and now your

mistake has ruined us all! [*He examines what* MICHAEL *has done.*] It's spoiled—utterly spoiled! Oh, Mother, Mother, we're ruined! No boots could in any way be cut from that now—only soft slippers! [*The servant of the* NOBLEMAN *bursts back into the room. He is very excited.*

SERVANT: I have been sent back about the boots.

SIMON: About the boots.

SERVANT: My master no longer needs them.

SIMON [*repeating slowly*]: Your master no longer needs them?

SERVANT: He is dead! . . . Hardly had he rejoined his lady in the sledge and we'd started off, the horses had been whipped into a gallop, and we were flying across the snow, when we heard a great cry from our mistress for us to stop . . . and before we could get down and go to him, he was dead. The life was out of him and he rolled over on to the floor of the carriage, like a sack. . . . My mistress has sent me back. I am to tell you there is no longer any need for the boots, but you are to use the leather to make soft slippers for the corpse.

SIMON [*slowly, incredulously*]: Soft slippers for the corpse? . . .

SERVANT: I shall return for them to-morrow. Good-day, masters. [*Exit.*

SIMON: Soft slippers for the corpse! . . .

[SIMON *and* MATRYONA *stare at* MICHAEL, *who sits down and commences work on the slippers. The stage becomes black.*

SCENE III

The light goes up again in a moment on a busy scene. It is towards evening. MICHAEL *and* SIMON *are at work.* ANIUSKA, *on the floor, is engrossed with her toys—a number of rough, but brilliantly painted*

wooden ones. MATRYONA *moves to and fro ceaselessly, busied on household tasks.*

A timid knock at the door. The work in the room stops —the knock is repeated a little louder.

SIMON : It's late for customers.

MATRYONA : See who it is, Aniuska.

[*The child opens the door. Whoever it was outside has gone a few steps away, and* ANIUSKA *disappears. In a moment she is back again.*

ANIUSKA : There's a lady with two little girls, and one of them has a bad leg.

[MICHAEL'S *attention has been caught—he rises from his bench. A woman appears in the doorway. She has two little girls with her, of whom one is lame.* MICHAEL *is evidently deeply moved by them.*

WOMAN : Good-evening, good folk.

SIMON : Good-evening to you.

WOMAN : I have come about some shoes for these little girls.

SIMON : Pray come in. What sort of shoes do you want ?

WOMAN : I want leather shoes made for them for the spring.

SIMON : We can do that. Welted or turned over, linen-lined. My man Michael is a master at the work.

[MICHAEL *has continued to stare at the two little girls excitedly. Realizing now that all eyes are on him he shrinks back into the shadow.*

WOMAN : Will you take the measure now ?

SIMON : Yes.

WOMAN [*lifting the lame child on to her lap*] : Take the two measures from this little girl. Make one shoe for the lame foot and three for the sound one, and two pairs for the other little girl. They both have the same-sized shoes—they are twins.

SIMON [*as he takes the measurement*]: How did it happen to her? She is such a pretty little girl. Was she born so?

WOMAN: No. Her mother crushed her leg.

MATRYONA: Aren't you their mother, then?

WOMAN: No. I am neither their mother nor any relation to them. They were quite strangers to me, but I adopted them.

MATRYONA: They are not your children, and yet you are so fond of them?

WOMAN: How can I help being fond of them? I fed them both—I had a child of my own, but God took him. I was not so fond of him as I am now of these.

MATRYONA: Whose children are they?

[ANIUSKA *has made friends with the other little girl and has taken her to the toys. As soon as the measurement is taken the lame child joins them, and on the floor the three play together.*

The daylight is fading, and the light in the room has grown very dim. There is a lamp on the table which sheds its soft light on the group round it; but the shadows outside the circle are very deep and black; MICHAEL *in his far corner cannot be seen.*

WOMAN: Their parents died both in one week. My husband and I lived in the same village. Their father was a lonely man—a woodcutter in the forest. When felling trees one day they let one fall on him. It fell across his body and crushed him. They hardly got him home before he died; and that same week his wife gave birth to these two little girls. She was poor and alone, she had no one, young or old, with her, and alone she met her death. The next morning I went to see her, but when I entered the hut, poor thing, she was already stark and cold. In dying she had rolled on to one of the children and crushed its leg. The village folk came

to the hut, washed the body, laid her out, made a coffin, and buried her. They were good folk. The babies were left alone. What was to be done with them? I was the only woman there who had a baby at the time, and so I fed my own boy—and these two . . . and God so ordered it, that these grew up, while my own was buried before he was two years old. I had no more children of my own, and how lonely I should be without these two little girls! How can I help loving them! They are the joy of my life. . . . [*She rises and watches the children playing on the floor.*] And what a beautiful little one you have! [*She turns to* MATRYONA.] We are very lucky. . . . Come, little ones, say good-bye, it's late—we should be back.

[*She helps up the lame one.*

MATRYONA: You are not from these parts?

WOMAN: No. We are staying with a neighbour. They told me to come to you for the shoes. They will be ready soon?

SIMON: In two days.

WOMAN: Thank you, and good-night.

SIMON [*opening the door for her*]: Good-night to you.

MATRYONA: It's dark. Do you know the way?

WOMAN: When I get on to the pathway.

MATRYONA: Simon, show the way. It's rough for the little one. . . . Good-bye, little ones. [*She kisses the two little girls.*] Come back to get your shoes and play again with Aniuska.

ANIUSKA: Can I go with Daddy?

MATRYONA: Down to the pathway. . . . Hey, but it's dark! Perhaps this will light the way.

[MATRYONA *takes the lamp from the table and carries it to the doorway. There she stands with it, high above her head, to light the others down the pathway. She waves good-bye; then she herself, still with the lamp, disappears out of doors. Inside the room it is dark. Then, from the corner in*

which MICHAEL *was, a strange light begins to shine. The light grows gradually brighter until* MICHAEL *is seen clearly in the midst of it.*

MATRYONA *comes back into the room. She goes straight to the table, upon which she replaces the lamp. She does not see* MICHAEL *until she turns. Then :*

MATRYONA [*her voice low with awe and fear*] : Simon ! . . . Simon ! . . .

[SIMON, *with* ANIUSKA, *comes back into the room.*

SIMON : . . . God protect us ! . . .

MATRYONA : . . . Michael is smiling . . . I cannot bear to look !

SIMON [*in low awe*] : Michael . . . Michael, we are afraid before you ; we do not know, and we are afraid. Only tell me this : why does your face shine so ?

MICHAEL : Light shines from me because I have been punished, and now I am forgiven.

SIMON : And why do you smile so, and why have you smiled so, these three times ?

MICHAEL : I smiled three times, because I was sent to learn three truths, and I have learnt them. . . . One I learned when your wife pitied me, and that is why I smiled the first time. The second I learned when the rich man ordered the boots, and I smiled the second time, and now I have learnt the third truth, and I smiled the third time.

SIMON [*with low reverence*] : Tell me, Michael, what were you punished for ? And what were the three truths ? That I, too, may know them.

MICHAEL : I was an angel in heaven, and disobeyed. [*The three figures, of* SIMON, *of* MATRYONA, *and* ANIUSKA, *can be seen dimly, in a little group, by the light of the lamp on the table : its light seems to burn very low and small beside the great light round* MICHAEL. MATRYONA *is seen to kneel, and the child, observing, kneels too.*] God sent me to fetch a woman's soul.

I flew to earth and saw a sick woman lying alone, who had just given birth to two little girls. When she saw me she understood, and she wept and said, "Angel of God! My husband has just been buried —killed by a falling tree. There is no one to care for my babes and set them on their feet before I die. Children cannot live without father or mother."

And I hearkened to her. And I flew to the Lord and said: "Her husband has just been killed, and she has two new-born babes; I have not taken her soul." And God said: "Go, take the mother's soul, and learn three truths. Learn: WHAT DWELLS IN MAN; WHAT IS NOT GIVEN TO MAN; and, WHAT MEN LIVE BY. When thou hast learnt these three things thou shalt return to heaven."

So I flew again to earth, and took the mother's soul. Her body rolled over and crushed one babe, twisting its leg. I rose above the village, but a wind seized me, and my wings drooped and dropt. Her soul rose alone, while I fell to earth, by the roadside. . . . Never before had I known human needs, but then I was hungry, frozen, and in pain. Suddenly I heard a man coming along the road. [*A movement from* SIMON. *He is seen to be listening with the most intense excitement.*] For the first time since I became a man, I saw the mortal face of a man. And when he saw me he frowned, and seemed terrible to me, and he passed me by on the other side. [*A low cry escapes* SIMON. *He is seen to sink his head into his hands, bowing before the angel.*] I despaired. Suddenly I heard him coming back. I looked up and did not recognize the same man. Before, I had seen death in his face, but now he was alive, and I recognized in him the presence of God. [SIMON *is seen to raise his head, and hold himself up straight again.*] He took me to his home—a woman was

there. [*The kneeling* MATRYONA *is seen to sink low to the ground.*] She was still more terrible than the man had been : the spirit of death came from her ; I could not breathe for the stench of death that spread around her. She wished to drive me out into the cold, and I knew that if she did so, she would die. [*A low cry comes from* MATRYONA.] But suddenly she changed ; she brought me food, and when I looked at her I saw that Death no longer dwelt in her ; she had become alive, and in her, too, I saw God. And I remembered my first lesson : " LEARN WHAT DWELLS IN MAN." And I understood that in man dwells Love—and I smiled the first time.

A year passed. A man came to order boots that should wear for a year. And I saw behind his shoulder my comrade, the Angel of Death. And I knew before the sun set he would take the rich man's soul. And I remembered my second lesson : " LEARN WHAT IS NOT GIVEN TO MAN." It is not given to man to know his own needs—and I smiled the second time.

A year passed. And there came the girl-children with the woman ; and I heard how they had been kept alive, and I knew that I had learned the third truth—and I smiled the third time. . . . [*The angel's voice begins to ring with a splendid triumph.*] . . . I have learnt that all men live, not by care for themselves, but by Love. I remained alive, when I was a man, not by care of myself, but because Love was present in a passer-by and because he and his wife pitied and loved me. The orphans remained alive, not because of their mother's care, but because there was Love in the heart of a woman—a stranger, who pitied and loved them. . . . It seems to men that they live by care of themselves, but in truth it is Love alone by which they live. [*The angel's arms are stretched out and up.*] I have

learnt my third lesson : " WHAT MEN LIVE BY "— it is Love alone by which they live.

[*Suddenly there is complete darkness. . . . Then, when the light of the lamp seems to steal back into the room,* SIMON, MATRYONA, *and* ANIUSKA *are alone in the cottage.*

CURTAIN

COMMENTARY

THE ONE-ACT PLAY

THE one-act play is regarded by many people as an invention of the twentieth century, but this is only partly true. The short continuous play, with an approach to artistic unity, is no new thing. It may be one of the oldest forms of drama, for short farcical plays appear to have developed independently in ancient Greece and ancient Italy, and—whether they represent the old tradition or a fresh beginning—short farces flourished in Italy, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, as the *Commedia dell' arte*, and in other European countries.

The earliest English plays developed, like classical Greek drama, from the ritual of religious worship, and these "mysteries," miracle plays, and interludes of the Middle Ages were nearly all plays in one act. When the Puritans closed the theatres in 1642, travelling actors who evaded the law often performed short farces called "drolls"; and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many plays in one act were written as "curtain-raisers" or "after-pieces" for the professional theatre, or as the "sketches for amateurs" which are still occasionally inflicted upon us. They were chiefly burlesques or farces, and represent on the whole a steady degeneration of the one-act form.

Yet, though these and many other instances can be given, it remains unproved that they represent a continuous development, in Europe or in Britain, of the one-act play, for this subject has not been fully investigated. We can be certain only that in the twentieth century the one-act play has been recreated —in Britain, Canada, the U.S.A., and many other

countries—and recognized for the first time as a distinct dramatic form of high merit, which may be the vehicle of tragedy or comedy, " morality " or fantasy, or almost anything dramatic. Unfortunately there is little demand in our professional theatres for one-act plays, but they are fully appreciated by the " Little Theatres " and the amateur dramatic societies.

THE AUTHORS AND THE PLAYS

Bernard Gilbert: The Old Bull

The English regional novel began in the nineteenth century, with the Brontës writing of Yorkshire, " George Eliot " of Warwickshire, and Thomas Hardy of " Wessex " (the south-west and west), while Anthony Trollope, alone among English novelists, added an imaginary new county to the map in his Barsetshire novels. Many writers in our own day have followed suit, Mr. Eden Phillpotts speaking for Devonshire, for example, Miss Sheila Kaye Smith for Sussex, and Miss Constance Holme for Westmorland. Shropshire was Mary Webb's county and Cornwall was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's. For in England the local life, like the scenery, changes markedly every fifty miles or less, and the folk of every county have their own characteristic speech and idiosyncrasies.

Mr. Bernard Gilbert's rural scene is in East Anglia, but instead of describing actual places thinly disguised, he invented " Bly District," " a section of three or four hundred square miles, offered as an example of rural England, uncontaminated by English civilization. . . . Reference to the map shows it running up from the sea, through successive belts of marsh, fen, sand, heath, moor, and limestone, embracing most kinds of soil and methods of cultivation, and nearly all classes of countrymen."

Indeed, Mr. Gilbert seems to have taken very literally R. L. Stevenson's advice [1] to writers to study the map, real or imaginary, of the scene of their stories: his books are equipped not only with maps and plans, but with directories and family trees. Whatever may be said of this apparatus of realism, Mr. Gilbert's thirty years' observation of rural life gives truth to his characters and stories, and, like most modern writers, he does not give us pretty conventional descriptions of "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain," as it appears to the casual visitor from the town; he depicts villages as he sees them at close quarters.

FOR DISCUSSION [2]

1 In what way would the Elmitts have learned the value of their furniture, "if Pantacks were not down in the Gulland marshes"?

2 Is the explanation of the state of affairs at the beginning of the play made natural and interesting?

3 Which is Charles's most unpleasant remark?

4 A dramatist often prepares the way for an important incident or disclosure by giving hints and suggestions, which make it more convincing when it comes. In this play, how are we prepared for the disclosure of the will and its terms, and for the death of Brutus?

5 When is Bones most amusing?

6 What is the meaning of the phrases "poetic justice" and "hoist with his own petard"? Who was the author of the latter? How do they apply to this play?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

7 Is the title of the play well chosen?

8 Re-read the description of the Grange kitchen,

[1] See *My First Book*. It is in the edition of *Treasure Island* in the Teaching of English Series (Nelson). There is another very interesting map at the beginning of *Prester John*, by John Buchan.

[2] Fairly numerous questions are given in order to provide variety and a choice. It is not suggested that every class should necessarily plough through every question.

visualizing it as clearly as you can, and then describe the best bedroom and the view from one of its windows.

9 Does the death of the old bull make the ending of the play seem artificially neat? Did you anticipate it? If so, at what point in the play, and why?

10 Write a short monologue in which Charles gives a friend his version of the incidents of the play. (To do this well you must not only imitate his manner of speech, but realize clearly how things appear to him and how he will try to justify himself.)

FURTHER READING

11 *Eldorado* and *King Lear at Hordle*, plays by Bernard Gilbert.

12 *Mr. Sampson*, a Cornish play, by Charles Lee, in *Twenty One-act Plays* (Dent); *Mrs. Adis*, a Sussex play, by Sheila Kaye-Smith and John Hampden, in *Ten Modern Plays* (Nelson) and in *The Nelson Play-books*; *The Market Money*, a Devonshire play, by Eden Phillpotts, in *Twelve Modern Plays* (Duckworth).

BEULAH MARIE DIX: ALLISON'S LAD

Miss Dix, who is Mrs. George H. Flebbe, is an American: her ancestors were among the original seventeenth-century settlers in Massachusetts. But she has spent a good deal of her time in England, and many of her plays and novels are English in setting. The list of her publications in *Who's Who in America* is a long one, for she has been writing plays and novels since her undergraduate days at Harvard in 1895, though since 1916 she has written mainly for the cinema.

Four of Miss Dix's novels deal, like *Allison's Lad*, with the time of Oliver Cromwell and the English Civil War: *The Fighting Blade, Hugh Gwyeth, Blount of Breckenhow*, and *The Fair Maid of Graystones*.

FOR DISCUSSION

(NOTE: Period words, e.g. *cinq and tray*, five and three; *main*, game; *angel*, gold coin.)

13 In what way does the speech of Winwood, Goring, and Hopton differ from that of the other characters?

14 What is suggested by Winwood's remark, "You called me, Sir?" and Strickland's reply? What peculiar importance has this suggestion with regard to the climax of the play? What other similar suggestions can you find?

15 There are two verbal repetitions in the play which are very effective. What are they, and why are they effective?

16 Why does Strickland harp on the idea that Winwood is a gallant lad?

17 In what way does the dramatist prepare us for the revelation that Winwood has broken his parole, and that Goring and Hopton have done so? In which case is the preparation more elaborate, and why? How does this preparation strengthen the play?

18 Why does Bowyer say "In good time, Colonel Drummond!" when the latter enters?

19 What feelings is Bowyer expressing when he says, "Frank Hopton, too?"

20 What do you think of the defence made by the three who have broken their paroles?

21 "I'm a coward," says Tom Winwood. Is this true?

22 Whose was the "strong arm" that was round Winwood at the last?

23 How does Strickland learn that "Allison's lad" died gallantly?

24 In what way has the dramatist prepared the audience for Strickland's death?

25 Where does the climax of this play occur?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

26 The three at table talk heatedly in dumb-show. Describe this dumb-show in detail, taking care to make the actions of each man as characteristic of him as possible.

27 Write a character sketch of Tom Winwood, *or* Strickland, *or* Allison.

28 Is the play strengthened or weakened by the supernatural element at the end? Can you suggest another ending, without this element, which would be as good?

29 If you examine the play carefully you will find that it can be divided naturally into sections, just as a short story is divided into paragraphs. For instance, it is obvious that the second section begins with Bowyer's question, "How is it with you, Will, old lad?"

Make these divisions, and write down the first line of each and a short title for each. You can learn from this a good deal about the structure of the play.

30 You will sometimes see the term "Wardour Street English" used in connection with historical novels and plays. It is derived from the name of a London street that was famous for its dealers in antique and pseudo-antique furniture, and it is used to describe the archaic style that some writers adopt to give their stories an atmosphere of the past. Used clumsily, this method soon becomes absurd: we quickly tire of the robber baron, however bad he may be, who always calls his servant "varlet," and garnishes every speech with such words as "anent" and "erst" and "by my halidom!"

What do you think of Miss Dix's archaisms?

31 The author of an historical play or novel may attempt to reproduce in part, or at least to suggest, the speech of the time; or deliberately make his dialogue strikingly modern; or try to make it "timeless"—free from any particular suggestion of the past or present. Can you give examples of all three methods? Which do you think the best, and why?

FURTHER READING

32 *The Eve of Chalgrove*, by Margaret Ashworth, in *Community Plays, Senior Book*, edited by Nora Ratcliff (Nelson); *Oliver Cromwell*, by John Drinkwater (Sidgwick and Jackson); *Count Albany*, by Donald Carswell, in *Twenty One-act Plays* (Dent).

Robert Finch and Betty Smith: Summer Comes to the Diamond O

Mr. Finch has written much of Montana, for although he was born in Iowa it was here that his boyhood was spent and he attended the University of Montana for a short period before going on to the famous Drama School at Yale. After gaining experience as a professional actor in five Broadway productions he joined Paul Green's professional writing group at the University of North Carolina, published several plays, and was awarded a Rockefeller Playwriting Fellowship for 1940–41. Then he joined the army, but he found time to begin a novel and a full-length play of Montana in the 1860's.

Summer Comes to the Diamond O appeared in *The Best One-act Plays of 1940*, and Mr. Finch has been represented in several other well-known anthologies. The Warner Brothers film, *Star in the Night*, which won the Academy Award for the best short picture of 1945, was an adaptation of his one-act play, *The Desert Shall Rejoice.*

Miss Betty Smith became famous suddenly in 1943 with the publication of her novel, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, but she had been writing for some years before that and she began with plays. She took the course in play-writing at the University of Michigan, she went on to the Yale School of Drama, and then the Dramatists Guild of New York awarded her a Fellowship in Play-writing. She spent some time with professional theatre companies, and in six years she wrote over seventy one-act plays.

FOR DISCUSSION

33 Do you regard Windy as a liar? How do you define a lie?

34 Who was Charlemagne ? What do you know about Montana ?

35 Is the humour of the play provided more by the characterization than by the plot ?

36 Is the title justified ?

37 Is the play comedy, farce, or fantasy ? (It is necessary to get quite clear, by reference to a good dictionary and by discussion, the meanings of these terms.)

38 What other cowboy plays or stories do you know ?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

39 What have you learned from the play about ranch life in Montana ?

40 Imagine that you are " Granny," and write a letter to Genevieve, describing what has happened. Do not forget the angel cakes, and remember throughout that you have to look at everything from Granny's point of view, not your own, and write in his style.

41 Write the whole of the story that Windy is beginning to tell at the end of the play : We was sailing round the Cape . . .

Maurice Baring : Catherine Parr

The Hon. Maurice Baring (1874–1946) served in the Diplomatic Service, and in the Royal Air Force during the First World War, and was a special correspondent of the London *Morning Post* and later of the London *Times* in Manchuria, Russia, and the Balkans from 1904 to 1912. The list of his publications in *Who's Who* is a very long one, for he wrote novels, poems, plays, essays, travel books, studies of Russian literature, biographies, and two autobiographical volumes, *The Puppet Show of Memory* (1922) and *Have You Anything to Declare ?* (1936). All his work was cultured and accomplished, and some of the best of it is in the " gentle mockeries " of *Dead Letters* (1910), *Diminutive Dramas* (1911), and *Lost Diaries* (1913).

His *Diminutive Dramas*, from which *Catherine Parr* is taken, contains a number of plays nearly all of which deal lightly with incidents and persons famous in history and legend—King Alfred burning the cakes, for example, Julius Cæsar's wife giving a dinner-party, and Shakespeare rehearsing *Macbeth* at the Globe Theatre. They show a lively wit and ingenuity, and depend for their humorous effect chiefly upon a general lowering of the emotional level, by the presentation as very ordinary people of characters whom we expect to be impressive or heroic.

FOR DISCUSSION

42 "A woman of your experience" is Henry's unpleasant reminder that Catherine was a widow when he married her. She retorts by reminding him—of what?

43 Henry was a good musician. He played several instruments, sang well, and composed a number of songs. What is assonance? (Bucephalus is pronounced Bū-sĕf'-a-lŭs.) What do you know about Alexander the Great?

44 His pride in his music was equalled by his pride in his learning, which he shows here by referring to the Greek writers, Plutarch, Xenophon, and Aristotle.

45 "My family has no blood on its escutcheon." Henry had executed two of his wives and many of his enemies. What does "escutcheon" mean, and what does it stand for here?

46 Dr. Butts, afterwards Sir William Butts, was the King's physician. His reply by the page, "Dr. Butts says your Majesty was quite correct as to the colour of Alexander the Great's horse," is one of the best things in the play. What does it tell you about Dr. Butts?

47 When is Henry (*a*) most on his dignity, (*b*) most angry, (*c*) most good-tempered, (*d*) most anxious to please his wife?

48 Which is Catherine's most spiteful remark?

49 At what point are they quarrelling most furiously?

50 Do you like the people in this play?

51 Would you describe this as an historical play?

52 What is the difference between pathos and bathos? Is this play bathetic?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

53 The dramatist has not given many stage-directions. Copy out the passage from " I suppose you mean I am a bigot " to " a great many letters to write," adding full stage directions. You may begin like this :

KING HENRY [*his temper rising again*] : I suppose you mean I am a bigot ?

CATHERINE [*indignantly*] : You can turn what one says into meaning anything you like. [*Injured and emphatic.*

54 " As a matter of fact, all I said was that the horse was black." Write two short letters from Henry and Catherine respectively, in which they describe the quarrel to friends of theirs. You may be sure that they have very different ideas of what happened, and that each is convinced that the other was altogether in the wrong. Show this as clearly and humorously as you can. (Note : *Bucephalus* means ox-headed.)

55 Write a one-act play about any historical characters, in the same style as this play. If you choose the incident of King Alfred and the Cakes you may be able to compare your play with the one in *Diminutive Dramas* on the same subject.

56 Draw a plan of the stage, showing the positions of the table, chairs, bookcase, and entrances, and of the characters when Henry is telling the Page to find the Chamberlain.

FURTHER READING

57 *Diminutive Dramas*, by Maurice Baring.

58 Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, or *The Queen and the Cardinal*, in Evelyn Smith's *Little Plays from Shakespeare, Second Series* (Nelson) ; *The New Wing at Elsinore*, by St. John Hankin, in *Ten Modern Plays* (Nelson).

H. HALL AND R. MIDDLEMASS : THE VALIANT

Holworthy Hall is the name of one of Harvard's old dormitories, and Harold Everett Porter—who had graduated from Harvard in 1909—took it as his pen-name when he published his first book in 1913.

This was followed by a series of novels, short stories, magazine serials, and poems, for he was a prolific writer. He was a publisher also, becoming president of the A. D. Porter Company of New York in 1915, and during the First World War he served in the U.S. Air Force. He died in 1936.

Porter's collaborator in this play, Mr. Robert M. Middlemass, was one of his class-mates at Harvard and was intended for a business career. But his love of drama lured him into the theatre, to become a successful actor, producer, and playwright. He has been closely associated with the Theatre Guild in its productions of unusual plays by American and other authors. The plays of his own that have been produced on Broadway include *Americans All*, *The Clutching Claw*, and *The Budget*. He is now in Hollywood.

The Valiant has proved remarkably popular. It has been performed over five thousand times by professionals and amateurs, and broadcast on several occasions, and it was made by Paul Muni into one of the first of the " talkies."

FOR DISCUSSION

59 Do you think that Dyke really committed the murder ?

60 At which point do you first become certain that Dyke is the girl's brother, and why ?

61 What reasons, if any, will the girl have for suspecting the truth when she thinks it all over ? Can she be certain ?

62 Arrange a formal debate on the motion : That capital punishment should be abolished.

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

63 Is this play a tragedy or a melodrama ?

64 Was Dyke right to conceal his identity, or should he have given way to the Warden's arguments about " the four thousand others " ?

65 Compare and contrast James Dyke with Tom Winwood in *Allison's Lad.*

FURTHER READING

66 *A Man of Ideas*, by Miles Malleson, in *Fifteen Modern Plays* (Nelson); *The House with the Twisty Windows*, by Mary Pakington, in *Ten Modern Plays.*

Norman McKinnel: The Bishop's Candlesticks

Norman McKinnel (1870–1932) made a high place for himself in the English theatre, but as an actor, not a playwright, for he wrote only two plays besides this. He made his reputation at the Court Theatre, London, during the famous period of its management, from 1904 to 1907, by J. E. Vedrenne and Harley Granville Barker, which opened a new epoch in British drama and brought Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, John Masefield, Gilbert Murray, and Granville Barker himself into the theatre. McKinnel "created" leading parts in some of the best plays of Galsworthy and Bernard Shaw, and had a long and distinguished career. He was "the typical great actor of the naturalistic school," writes Frank Vernon in *The Twentieth Century Theatre*—the modern school which does not act *at* the audience, but ignores it and acts only with and to the other actors on the stage. But "it is not method alone, it is the Herculean figure of the man which makes him so apt a symbol of the New Drama."

The Bishop's Candlesticks is an adaptation of unusual skill. The story of the encounter of Jean Valjean, the convict, with Monseigneur Welcome, Bishop of D——, occupies Chapters II to XII of Book II of *Fantine*, in Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables.* For this one-act play the long narrative, with its descriptions and

retrospections, has been very freely adapted and compressed. The play shows no marks of the process —it might well have been conceived in its present form; but it keeps the spirit and essence of the original.

FOR DISCUSSION

67 For what purpose is the incident of the salt-cellars introduced?

68 What is there unexpected in Persomé's speech beginning "Sorry, and why, pray? . . ." What is her motive in speaking so?

69 Why does Persomé say, "Brother, brother, you will break my heart"?

70 Why is the Convict "puzzled" when he repeats, "Suffered, suffered"?

71 Probably you have noticed that the Bishop is a master of the art of repartee. Which is his most effective reply?

72 Do you think that the change in the Convict will be permanent?

73 Is there any weak point in the play?

74 In what way does the Bishop resemble Windy in *Summer Comes to the Diamond O*?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

75 The danger always with a story like this is that it will become sentimental and unconvincing. Has this happened here, or does the play carry conviction? Give reasons for your answer.

76 What is the secret of the Bishop's power?

77 Describe the character of Persomé, and explain the dramatic value of the contrast in character between her and—at opposite extremes—the Bishop and the Convict.

78 Read the chapters of *Les Misérables* on which the play is based, and then explain the purpose of the changes that McKinnel made in his dramatization.

79 State in one sentence, and in abstract terms, what you consider to be the theme of the play.

FURTHER READING

80 Three one-act plays similar to this in theme: *The Only Legend*, by John Drinkwater; *In Safety*, by Margaret Macnamara; *Brother Wolf*, by Laurence Housman.

A. A. MILNE: THE PRINCESS AND THE WOODCUTTER

Mr. Milne's work is remarkable for its combination of charm and humour, versatility and popular appeal. As a contributor to *Punch*, as a playwright, novelist, essayist, pamphleteer, and writer for children, he has had successes in many fields. His comedies, like J. M. Barrie's, are usually at their best when touched with fantasy; they include *Mr. Pim passes by* (1919), *The Truth about Blayds* (1921), *The Dover Road* (1922), and *Michael and Mary* (1930). He has made a delightful play, *Toad of Toad Hall*, from that masterpiece for the young of all ages, *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame. Most successful of all his writings, however, and likely to outlive the rest, are *When we were very young* (1924) and the other volumes of stories and verses in which Christopher Robin, Pooh, Piglet, and their friends appear.

The Princess and the Woodcutter is the first act of one of his earliest plays, *Make-Believe*.

FOR DISCUSSION

81 Seven-headed bulls have gone out of fashion, but evidently they had their uses. How did this one help with the suitors? And how did he die?—the Princess is still unmarried!

82 What *is* the Red Prince like?

83 At which point do you feel that the Yellow Prince ought to be kicked (or smacked)?

84 What do you think of, "*amazed, as well he may be*"?

85 The author enjoys his stage directions as much as his dialogue. Which of the directions do you like best?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

86 If you have anticipated the advice of the Princess and "read the history books," you know the stories in which the poor miller's son kills the fiery dragon that has eaten all the Princess's suitors, and then marries the Princess; and the little kitchen-wench wins the handsome prince, while the ugly daughters of her cruel stepmother are all turned into centipedes or something equally unpleasant. They are good stories, and some of them are very old, and some are known all over the world; they are told in Eskimo huts under the flickering northern lights; and repeated by the story-teller to his little crowd of listeners at street corners in Persian bazaars; and laughed at by sunburnt boys and girls in the shade of the palm-trees on far Pacific islands.

Choose a fairy-tale or a folk-tale or a legend, and make it into a play, either seriously or in imitation of Mr. Milne. If you do not know a story that will do, you will find ample choice in *Stories from the Arabian Nights*, or *Folk-Tales of the Nations*, or *Tales from Hans Andersen and Grimm* (Teaching of English Series, Nelson).

FURTHER READING

87 *Make-Believe* and *Toad of Toad Hall*, by A. A. Milne.

88 *Plays in Verse and Mime*, by Rosalind Vallance (Nelson); *The Thrice-promised Bride*, by Cheng-Chin Hsiung, in *The Nelson Playbooks*.

J. A. Ferguson: Campbell of Kilmohr

Rev. John Ferguson is better known as novelist than playwright, for in recent years he has written mainly detective stories and thrillers such as *Stealthy*

Terror and *The Man in the Dark*, but good as they are it is impossible not to regret that he has written so few plays and no full-length plays at all. Scotland, like Ireland, has contributed greatly to the twentieth-century renaissance of British drama, but James Bridie, J. M. Barrie, and John Brandane have written no finer one-act play than *Campbell of Kilmohr* and nothing more essentially Scottish. Mr. Ferguson regards as his own best novel the historical tale, *Dalgarney Goes North* (Collins).

FOR DISCUSSION

89 The " gift " is the gift of second-sight—of seeing things happening at a distance or in the future. Have you met with it in any other plays, or stories ?

90 Who is the person to whom Stewart refers as " another and a greater " ?

91 Why does Morag push the dirk away and hide her face in her hands ?

92 Why did Pharaoh spare the butler ?

93 You will find the story of Haman, and how he came to be hanged on a gallows seventy feet high, in the Old Testament : *Esther*, chaps. iii–vii.

94 When do you most dislike Campbell ?

95 Is Mary Stewart *sad* because her son is dead ?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

96 Write a short account of any one who has given his life heroically for a cause in which he believed. If you do not know of any one, you should read Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's fine book called *The Roll Call of Honour* (Nelson).

97 This play is tragic, but not sad. Can you explain why it is not ?

98 Write a paragraph in praise of Dugald Stewart, or Mary Stewart.

99 After re-reading the play very attentively, write a character sketch of Campbell.

FURTHER READING

100 *The King of Morven, The Scarecrow, Such Stuff as Dreams,* one-act plays by J. A. Ferguson.

101 Scottish one-act plays: *Prelude to Massacre,* by Evan John; *The Pardoner's Tale,* by James Bridie; *Rory Aforesaid,* by John Brandane; *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins,* by Harold Chapin.

102 *The Escape of Prince Charles Edward,* in *A Book of Escapes and Hurried Journeys,* by John Buchan (Nelson).

Miles Malleson: Michael

Mr. Malleson is not only an accomplished and versatile actor, who has played very many parts since his first appearance at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre in 1912, but a playwright with a score of plays, long and short, to his credit.

He has made this play from a story by Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), the great Russian novelist, dramatist, and social reformer, whose long novel, *War and Peace,* is among the masterpieces of world literature and has lately been more widely read than ever. *What Men Live By* is a story with a moral, like so many of Tolstoy's writings, for he gave much thought to the great problem of how men should live so as to make the very best of life, for their fellow-men and for themselves. He wrote often of the Russian peasants, whom he knew and loved well, even before he gave away all his possessions so that he himself could live the simple life of a peasant. The glimpses of that life which we have in *Michael* are as true as they are vivid.

FOR DISCUSSION

103 "You must be a bad man—[because] you are afraid," says Matryona. Do you agree with her reasoning?

104 What do you feel about Michael after Aniuska's behaviour towards him at the end of Scene I ?

105 What do you think of Michael when he hears the news that the nobleman is dead ?

106 Choose two adjectives to describe the character of each of the following : Simon, Matryona, The Woman.

107 If *Michael* were written in one scene instead of three, how would it be arranged ? Do you think it would be as good ?

108 Which is the most striking incident in the play, and which the most impressive moment ?

109 Do you know any sentence in the New Testament which might be taken as a motto for the whole play ?

FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

110 Write down a title for each of the three scenes.

111 Explain how the three incidents taught Michael the three great truths that he had to learn.

112 Imagine that you are Simon *or* Matryona, and write a short account of the happenings in the last scene.

FURTHER READING

113 *What Men live by, Iván the Fool, The Bear-hunt,* and *Two Old Men,* in *Twenty-three Tales by Tolstoy,* translated by L. and A. Maude (Oxford University Press).

114 *Brother Wolf* and *Sister Gold,* one-act plays by Laurence Housman (Sidgwick and Jackson).

GENERAL

115 Which of the plays in this book do you like most, and which do you like least ? Give your reasons.

116 Describe an amusing incident in one of the plays.

117 Which character in the plays do you most admire, and why ?

118 Arrange the plays under the following headings : Comedies, Tragedies, Historical Plays, Fantasies, "Moralities."

119 Make scenery in miniature for any one of the plays, and set it up as it would be on the stage.

120 Which plays in this book would you choose as most suitable for performance (1) at a school concert, given at the end of the Christmas term, (2) by a Scout Troop, (3) by a branch of the United Nations Association? In each case explain the reasons for your choice.

121 Draw up from this book a programme of two, three, or four plays (according to the number of actors available) for performance by your own form or society. Choose and arrange the plays very carefully, to make a good and varied programme. Then cast the plays (that is, choose the actors), giving every person available the part for which he or she is most suited, omitting no one, and in a very few cases giving two parts to one player if this proves necessary. A play that cannot be cast fairly well should not be put in the programme.

122 When you have drawn up this programme of plays, write a short prologue for it, in rhymed verse.

123 Which part would you choose for yourself in your programme, and why?

124 Make a model theatre, with a painted stage-setting for any play in this book, figures of the characters painted and cut out, and electric lighting from "pea-bulbs," and a pocket-lamp battery, if you wish. You can give a performance of the play, preferably with one or two people to help you read the parts "behind the scenes." Full instructions for all this are to be found in *Everybody's Theatre*, written and illustrated by H. W. Whanslaw (Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co.).

125 The very essence of drama is conflict, and this may be of two different kinds—outer, and inner, conflict. Outer conflict takes place between two men or groups of men, or between a man and the society about him, or a power above him such as "fate": we have such a conflict between Cæsar's party and Brutus's party in *Julius Cæsar*, and between Hamlet and his uncle; between Malvolio and Sir Toby's party in *Twelfth Night*, and between Falstaff and society in general in *Henry IV*.

Inner conflict takes place in a character's nature. Sometimes it is between emotions that outward circumstances cause to clash, such as the struggle in the mind of Brutus between his patriotism and his love for Cæsar, or the struggle in Macbeth between ambition and honour. The general tendency of both tragedy and comedy, from

the time of the ancient Greeks to our own day, has been to give more and more attention to the inner, and less to the outer, conflict. Many plays contain both types, and these, of which *Hamlet* is the supreme example, are most likely to be both successful stage-plays and masterpieces of literature, because the outer conflict is easier to represent on the stage and holds the attention of the audience more firmly, while the inner conflict is more permanently interesting, more profound and satisfying.

Which plays in this volume are based chiefly upon (*a*) outer, and (*b*) inner conflict, and which upon the two combined ?

126 Our interest in dramatic conflict is greatly increased when we are kept in suspense as to the result (which does not necessarily mean that we are ignorant of the result), and so dramatists sometimes deliberately create suspense.

Find instances of this in comedy and in tragedy in this book.

127 It has been well said that a play can never rise above the level of its characterization. Though we may enjoy them thoroughly at the time, we feel that farce and melodrama, *Charley's Aunt* and *Bull-dog Drummond*, are inferior to comedy and tragedy because for their effects they depend upon theatrical incidents, upon transient things, and to gain these they sacrifice truth—especially truth and depth of characterization. They have no real connection with life.

128 " Tragedy is the imitation of one entire, great, and probable action, not told, but represented, which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our mind."—Aristotle, *Poetics* (*c.* 330 B.C.)

This famous theory of the " catharsis " (purging) by tragedy has been discussed more than anything else ever written about drama : it must certainly not be accepted without discussion. Why is high tragedy never depressing ? What kind of pleasure does it give ?

129 " The test of true comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter. . . . The stroke of the great humorist is world-wide."—George Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy* (1897)

" Tragedy at its best is a vision of the heart of life.

The heart of life can only be laid bare in the agony and exaltation of dreadful acts. The vision of agony, or spiritual contest, pushed beyond the limits of the dying personality, is exalting and cleansing. It is only by such vision that a multitude can be brought to the passionate knowledge of things exalting and eternal."—John Masefield, Preface to *The Tragedy of Nan* (1908)

" The drama is made serious—in the French sense of the word—not by the degree in which it is taken up with problems that are serious in themselves, but by the degree in which it gives the nourishment, not very easy to define, on which our imaginations live. We should not go to the theatre as we go to a chemist's, or a dramshop, but as we go to a dinner where the food we need is taken with pleasure and excitement. . . . Of the things which nourish the imagination humour is one of the most needful, and it is dangerous to limit or destroy it."—J. M. Synge, Preface to *The Tinker's Wedding* (1907)

Do you think that any of the tragedies and comedies in this book satisfy the requirements of Meredith and Masefield and Synge? If so, which are they? And which are the failures?

Meredith was a novelist and Synge a dramatist, and Mr. Masefield is both.

130 *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, by H. W. Fowler (Oxford University Press), should be within reach of every one who is writing or trying to write. If you can get hold of the book, study the illuminating article on " humour, wit, satire, sarcasm, invective, irony, cynicism, the sardonic," and illustrate each of these terms with examples from the plays in this collection.

131 " The primary magic of the theatre is the spoken word."—Frank Vernon. What do you think of this?

132 What advantages has the cinema over the theatre, and vice versa? What are the chief defects of the usual cinema entertainment?

133 It seems very probable that in a few years' time television will be as fully developed as the broadcasting of sound is at present. Do you think that the combination of the two is likely to supersede the theatre altogether? What advantages has the theatre?

134 Write a short criticism of any modern play that you have seen performed recently. (Deal with the play,

the acting, and the stage-settings, and remember that criticism involves appreciation of the good as well as the bad points.)

135 Who were the authors of the following plays ?

The Alchemist, The Admirable Crichton, The Good-natured Man, The Critic, The Silver Box, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, The Twelve-Pound Look, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Frogs, The Trojan Women, The Wild Duck, The Miser, The Rising of the Moon, The Winter's Tale, The Land of Heart's Desire, The Devil's Disciple, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Tragedy of Nan, The Cenci, The Plough and the Stars, The Rivals, The Shoemakers' Holiday, The Cherry Orchard, The Man with a Load of Mischief, The Anatomists, The Adding Machine, The Barretts of Wimpole Street, The Playboy of the Western World, The Emperor Jones, The Insect Play.

136 Write down the titles and the authors of the plays in which the following characters appear :

Autolycus, Lydia Languish, Old Gobbo, Felix Drinkwater, Justice Shallow, Mrs. Malaprop, Mistress Merrythought, Pegeen Mike, Horatio, Iago, Richard II, Joan of Arc, Henry VIII, Mr. Toad, Robots, Puff, Ophelia, Bobadilla, Tony Lumpkin, Tom Winwood, Hecuba, Sir Harry Sims, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Sir John Falstaff, Britannicus, Lord Loam, Brother Juniper.

137 In Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi*, the friar-painter says, in defence of his art :

" For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see ;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that—
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out."

Is there any play in this book which has made you feel that this may well be applied to drama, with " men and women " instead of " things " ?

138 Which plays in this book would you describe as " realistic " and which as " poetic " ? Discuss the meaning of the terms before you decide, and remember that a play need not be written in verse to be poetic in spirit.

139 A reviewer said recently that a certain play contained much realism and very little reality. What did he mean ?

140 The majority of modern plays deal with the life of the present day, and many with poor people. Do you prefer these to historical plays ? What are the advantages and disadvantages (*a*) for tragedy, (*b*) for comedy, in choosing as the chief characters of a play Irish fishermen or London costers, instead of emperors and queens and nobles of the " storied past " ?

141 It used to be regarded as essential to great tragedy that the protagonists should be of high rank, on the ground that their misfortunes and their fall would excite deeper compassion and were worthier subjects for drama. Do you agree with this, or do you think that a great tragedy can be written about people of humble position ? Consider the tragic plays that you know.

A SUGGESTION FOR FORM-ROOM ACTING

142 Elect leaders from the form and make each of them responsible for one of the plays that you wish to act. Having decided how many players are needed for each play, the leaders, taking turns, choose their companies from the form, and then each company prepares a " performance " of its play, to be given with the rest of the form as audience. The leader should act as " producer " in the preliminary rehearsal or rehearsals, and assign parts and positions on the " stage " and suggest movements, etc.

The performances can be very simple, with all the actors reading their parts, or they can be more elaborate, with some or all of the parts learned by heart and costumes improvised or borrowed. In any case simple properties and stage furniture are a great help. Plays acted in this way can be very enjoyable, and there is the advantage that if rehearsals can be held in a large room or in the open air, all the plays can be rehearsed at the same time.

ON WRITING ONE-ACT PLAYS

143 The form of drama with which we are most concerned in this book, the one-act play, is as distinct from the long play as the short story is from the novel. The difference is not merely one of length ; a true one-act play is not a condensed three-act play, nor can it be elaborated into a three-act play. The difference is not in continuity of action. The difference is a question of structure and of nature. A one-act play deals with a single dominant dramatic situation, and aims at producing a single effect, though the method used may vary greatly, from tragedy to farce, according to the nature of the effect desired. And since the play is to be acted in a short space of time, the greatest artistic unity and economy are essential to success. The attention of the audience must be seized at once and held to the end. There is *no time* for weak exposition, or dull or superfluous speeches, or a divided aim, because the play is too short to recover from any such defect—as a long play will sometimes recover. The one-act play demands the most scrupulous attention to structure and dialogue, and its artistic possibilities are almost unlimited.

Is *Michael* a one-act play ? Would *Allison's Lad* or *The Old Bull* gain by being expanded into a long play in several acts ?

144 Having enjoyed the plays in this book, you may like to try your hand as a playwright. Since to write good plays demands literary ability of a special kind and a first-hand knowledge of stage conditions, you need not be surprised if your first essay is not a masterpiece ; but the attempt is well worth making, and as fascinating as it is profitable. You may prefer to begin work on your play without more ado, following your own methods, but if your aim is to produce a play good enough for performance by your own school or society, a few preliminary suggestions and exercises may be serviceable.

145 First, as to the material. If you can take this from the life around you, and create plot and characters of your own, so much the better. Accurate observation is the basis of good writing, especially dramatic writing, and you will almost certainly write best about the things

that you know best. Everyday life is full of suggestions for plays—to those who know how to use them.

146 If you prefer a historical subject, choose and study carefully an episode that appeals to you, say from the history of your own school or town, or from the life of some great man of the past. When a number of writers are to work together on a long play, the chronicle play is the best type to choose, because they can write a scene each with much less difficulty than in most plays, the scenes being far more independent of one another. A final editing will, however, be necessary to bring all the scenes into line.

147 There remains a third method, to take an incident from a story and dramatize it. This has the great advantage of providing you with plot and characters and sometimes part of the dialogue, though very considerable changes must be made, for a play is a vastly different thing from a narrative. You should have no difficulty in finding material. Dickens's novels have always been the happy hunting-ground of the adapter of "Scenes from the Great Novelists." Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Stevenson, Kipling, Conan Doyle, and W. W. Jacobs may be plundered equally well. (Copyright work must not be used outside the class-room or reading-circle unless special permission is obtained from the owner.) A number of volumes in Nelson's Teaching of English Series are very useful. *Pattern Plays*, by E. C. Oakden and Mary Sturt, contains stories, plays made from these stories, and further stories to be made into plays, with valuable hints on dramatization. *A Book of Escapes* and *The Path of the King*, by John Buchan, are full of short, exciting incidents, and the non-copyright books include *The Arabian Nights*, Kingsley's *The Heroes*, *Scenes from "Quentin Durward,"* and the stories in Sir Henry Newbolt's *The Greenwood*.

Whether you borrow your plot or invent it, you will be well advised to begin by writing a scenario, that is, a brief outline of your projected play.

148 In most types of play, characterization is of very great importance. (Good characterization can be based only upon thoughtful, sympathetic observation of the people whom you meet.) The characters in your play must be different from one another and from you, and

the differences will appear in their attitudes towards one another and towards what is happening, in their actions, their opinions, and their modes of speech. A simple and obvious method of differentiating a character is to make him speak in dialect (if you know one) or in bad English. Self-important people use formal, and sometimes affected, modes of speech ; a talkative, shallow man may gabble on while everyone else is awed into silence, and thereby make their silence more impressive ; a coward will meet a sudden danger in a very different way from a brave man ; and so on. Moreover, the characters must be fairly consistent, and if any changes are to appear in them the audience must be carefully prepared in advance. If one of your persons suddenly does something that belies his whole character, merely in order to make your plot work out, then your play will be a failure. If, for example, your unselfish man is going to act selfishly in a particular instance, the motives and circumstances that work the change in him must be carefully and convincingly shown. Make your characters human. The entirely faultless hero and the entirely fiendish villain belong to melodrama, not to real life. And let their doings be human too, not superhuman.

149 Examine carefully the ways in which the characters are differentiated in *Campbell of Kilmohr*, *Allison's Lad*, or *The Old Bull*, and describe the dramatists' methods.

150 A one-act play should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. This piece of advice is necessary, because many first plays by young writers do not possess any of these desirable things. The structure of the plays in this book may be profitably studied. Try to divide each play into Exposition, Complication, Climax, and Dénouement.

151 In the Exposition the situation is explained, the characters are introduced, and action that happened before the play began is made known. What methods are used, in these and in other plays, to take the audience's attention quickly and to make the giving of information natural ?

152 In the Complication the solution of the dramatic situation is made more difficult by the introduction of fresh factors, and suspense and interest are heightened.

Exposition and Complication sometimes overlap. Do they do so in any play in this collection ?

153 At the Climax the play reaches its highest level of emotion and tension. There may be several minor climaxes followed by the major climax : find these, if they are to be found, in *Allison's Lad*, *The Valiant*, and *Campbell of Kilmohr*.

154 A Climax may be an inner or an outer one, corresponding to inner or outer conflict, or both combined. Find examples in any of the plays in the book.

155 The Dénouement, or final unravelling of the plot, follows closely upon the climax in most one-act plays. Sometimes the climax and dénouement come together a moment before the curtain falls.

156 A thorough way of getting to understand the construction of a one-act play is to study every action and every speech, to find out why the author put it in.

157 Do not forget the elements of suspense and surprise. There is a story that Lord Dunsany has had only one lesson in play-writing, given him by W. B. Yeats : " Surprise . . . is what is necessary. Surprise, and then more surprise, and that is all." But Lord Dunsany has given himself many other lessons since.

158 Climaxes might be divided into those that involve surprise and those that fulfil expectation.

159 The importance of dialogue is obvious. A very important point, emphasized by Mr. Percival Wilde, is that dialogue does not usually develop the main line of thought from A to B to C to D to E and so on, but, say, from A to C to D to E to B to C to X to E to F to G to Y to C, etc.—doubling back, leaping forward, repeating important ideas and enlarging upon them, and sometimes bringing in ideas that are not strictly relevant but create atmosphere or reveal character or give the illusion of real life. Study any passage of dialogue that appeals to you and see how far this analysis applies to it.

160 The ideal to be aimed at in all prose dialogue is that so vigorously described by the great Irish dramatist, J. M. Synge, in his preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* : " Every speech as fully flavoured as a nut or apple . . ." and every speech characteristic of the speaker.

161 Important as it often is that the dialogue should

appear to be quite natural, it can never copy exactly the conversation of real life. Like the other arts, drama does not merely copy life ; it selects and arranges the raw material that life provides, in order to re-create and interpret.

Now :

162 Write only the scenario of the play you have projected.

163 Write an exact word-picture of the setting of the play.

164 Write a detailed description of the characters, the features, the dress, and the bearing of the people in your play.

165 Write your one-act play.

166 " I cautiously bought a book about how to write plays (there are many of them) in order to see whether Mr. Chapin wrote his properly. But the book was so learned and the author knew so much, and the subject when studied grew so difficult, that I hurriedly abandoned my inquiry. . . . Mr. Chapin certainly breaks most of the rules laid down in the early chapters of the guide-book, but breaks them so agreeably that one feels he had unconsciously found a better way for himself. . . . Perhaps this is merely his masterly cunning, and he has skilfully removed the ladders by which he climbed, but I scarcely think so. I think he was the ' born dramatist,' who did not know how it was done but could do it."—J. M. Barrie

ACTING NOTES

PERMISSION TO PERFORM THESE PLAYS MUST BE OBTAINED FROM THE ADDRESSES GIVEN AT THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PLAYS

THESE brief notes on the plays in this collection are intended for those who know little or nothing of the art of dramatic production. There are several excellent books for the amateur, which teach as much as it is possible to teach of any art in a book, and these notes merely attempt to supplement such books by dealing with the particular problems of the specific plays.

THE OLD BULL

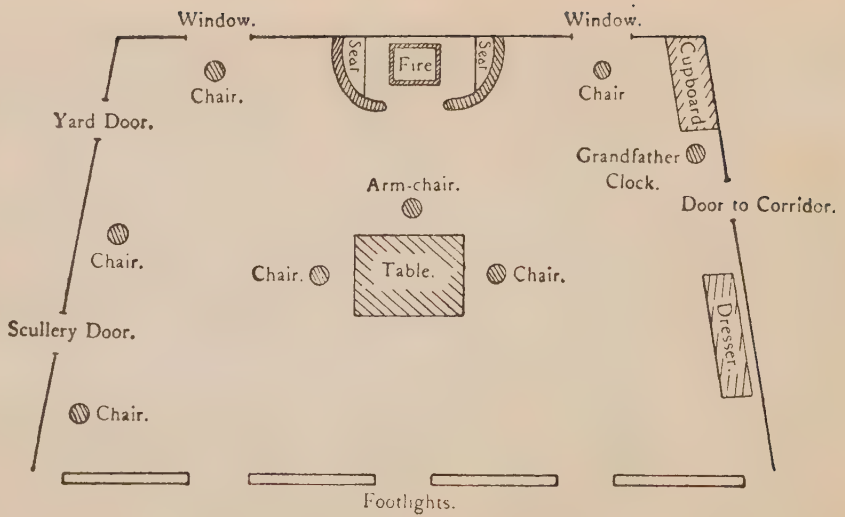
The play takes about thirty minutes in performance.

The description of the Grange kitchen may dismay the producer as much as it would gladden the American, but though such an elaborate setting would make an excellent background for the play, it can be discarded without hesitation if simplicity is desired. In fact the play can very well be given in daylight on a curtained stage or in the open air, with no other furniture than a table (centre), three chairs (behind and either side of the table), and a dresser (right) ; and two entrances, left and right.

If this setting is adopted, the fireplace being dispensed with, it is suggested that the following stage movements should be followed. Sarah enters from the left (audience's left) with a bottle of " sherry " (ginger ale ?), and three wine-glasses on a tray. She crosses to the dresser on the right, sets down the tray, takes a duster from a drawer, and polishes the glasses during the first part of her dialogue with Bones, who also enters from the left and stands at left centre. They keep these positions until Bones says, " I know which I'd sooner have in the old gentleman's place," when Sarah comes to the back of the right-hand chair as she " puts her fingers to her lips," and Bones moves a step or two nearer. When James enters, from the left, he crosses to the table, speaking as

he does so, and sits in the chair behind the table, full face to the audience, puts his hat on the chair against which Sarah is leaning, and makes a half-hearted attempt, soon abandoned, to mend the whip he is carrying. Bones goes out, left, and Sarah moves nearer to James, speaking confidentially till she hears or sees Charles approach, when she goes out quickly, right, with her head in the air. James, who has rested his head on his right hand while he was talking to Sarah, ignores Charles, who comes down-stage, left, puts his left foot on the chair and surveys his brother in silent derision for a moment before "giving James a poke with his riding-whip." Charles remains in this position until he sees the sherry, when he walks across to the dresser, right, talking about Uncle William as he goes. Having filled his glass, he lounges against the dresser, talking, until he says, "Perhaps you expected to be left in one of the farms," when he crosses to the chair, right, where Sarah stood, and leans across the back of it, putting his second glass of wine on the table. James starts up, *away from* Charles, at "You won't sack Bones?" and the two face each other thus until Sarah enters, right, with her message. She stands between them, but a little "up-stage of them," looking from one to the other. When told to go, James goes with obvious reluctance.

Charles then takes James's hat from the chair against which he is leaning, throws it on the floor and drops into the chair. Sarah moves round the back of the table until she is nearly at the opposite end, and then questions Charles, until she hurries out, right, to see about the yew. Charles gets a third glass of sherry, and sits down in the same chair. Bones enters left, and stands at left centre as before. When Sarah runs in, crying, "It's down," she stands behind the centre chair, and both she and Bones close in on Charles when they are all speaking at once. "At the height of the tumult" William Smithson enters, left, and, standing on the threshold, "takes command of the situation." After Charles has said, "I will if they don't shut up," William goes to the chair behind the table, and says, "Now," as he sits down. James, who has followed William in, remains in the background trying to quieten Sarah and Bones, until he says, "It's a poor lookout for me then, uncle," when he comes forward



STAGE PLAN FOR "THE OLD BULL"

and takes the one empty chair, left, in order to join in the discussion. The position is now as follows: seated, Uncle William in the middle, Charles at the right end of the table, and James at the left; standing, Sarah, between William and James, but a couple of paces back, and Bones a little to the left of James.

From this point the movements are sufficiently indicated by the stage directions in the text. At the end, Bones enters from the left and must come well downstage, left. All the others make an impulsive movement towards him as he speaks. If there is no front curtain, effective exits can be arranged as follows. After Sarah's last speech, Charles stamps off, right, speechless with anger. Bones goes out, left, as he makes his last speech, and Sarah and James follow him. Uncle William, chuckling, pours himself out a glass of sherry, drinks it with relish, laughs heartily, with a glance after Charles, and then goes out left.

There is only one small problem—the sound of the yew falling. This can be imitated behind the scenes by breaking a number of boughs that have been sawn half-through—and this needs rehearsal—or omitted entirely, without loss.

It will be seen that all the movements outlined above are simple and natural. The play must be made as realistic as possible—the more so because it is rather too "well made." The aim of the producer should be to make it go at the speed and in the manner of real life, and when this is done it is a very amusing play. It acts much better than it reads, and its acting quality will be found to advance steadily during rehearsal if the actors think out their characterization.

All of them, and Bones in particular, should speak more slowly than townsfolk do. Dialect need be only slightly suggested, except in the case of Bones, and is left to the actors. It is a good plan to make James rather unattractive, by accentuating the weakness of character which Mr. Gilbert implies in him, so that the play is not too obviously the story of the bad elder brother and the good younger brother, the motive of innumerable legends and tales all the world over.

ALLISON'S LAD

The play takes about thirty minutes in performance. Dramatic societies that have difficulty in filling women's parts, and boy's schools in particular, should be grateful to Miss Dix for having written that very rare thing—a good one-act tragedy in which all the characters are men. Moreover it is exceptionally easy to stage, and its stagecraft is so good that one feels it will almost "play itself" if the actors have sincere tragic feeling. It must be faithfully rehearsed, however, to guard against any mistake or hesitation that would break the emotional tension; faults of this kind are much more serious in tragedy than in comedy, and in a short play than in a long one. The actors who play Strickland and Winwood should have some poetry in them, and be sufficiently in sympathy to act well together. It is only by enthusiasm, sincerity, and patient hard work that the amateur can counterbalance to some extent his inevitable inferiority in technique to the professional actor.

Dark curtains and simple oak furniture, and a fireplace if possible, are all that is needed for the stage. Low lighting is essential, to give the "two o'clock in the morning" atmosphere, and in a small hall it may be possible to dispense with all except candles on the stage, if these are numerous and very carefully placed and tested. The expression of the players' faces must be visible from the back of the hall.

SUMMER COMES TO THE DIAMOND O

This play makes very considerable demands on every player in it, not on Windy only. Unless he can be well cast it should not be attempted at all, but the extent to which it succeeds—that is, the extent to which it carries conviction—will depend not only on Windy's vitality and imaginative power but almost as much on the conviction of the others' reactions to him. All the players must believe in the play and be ready to give themselves up to it, and even more than in most plays it is essential that they should all act every moment they

are on the stage, whether speaking or not; in other words they must not relapse for a second into their real selves, but must sustain continuously the thoughts and feelings of the characters they represent, or they will fail to " put over " the play.

Setting, dresses, and properties should be as realistic as possible.

The authors supply the following notes :

Costumes and Characteristics

COOKY : A short, grizzled fellow of indeterminate age. The cowboys rag him unmercifully though they are very fond of him and he is fond of them. He wears dirty denim pants and shirt, and has a dirty flour-sack tied round his waist instead of an apron.

CURLY : A handsome cowboy with wavy hair. He is romantically-minded and just a little vain of his looks. He is very likable, however. Tall and a little past twenty-one. He wears denim pants, a dark flannel shirt, a brightly coloured knotted scarf, wide-brimmed hat and cowboy boots.

TEX : A tall, rangy cowboy, about twenty-five, with a pronounced drawl. He is fond of criticizing and complaining, but very loyal and friendly. He wears denim pants and a plaid shirt. He is inclined to run things.

STUB : A quiet little fellow about twenty-four. He has a warm ready smile. He reacts to everything sympathetically. He is a great believer in everything. He plays the guitar and tries to conceal his pride in his ability. He is the most likable one of the lot. He wears denim pants and a flannel red-checked shirt with a brightly coloured neckerchief.

GRANNY : An old cowhand, about forty. He is cynical but not at all bitter. His face is worn by the weather of many years. He wears dark pants, a dark shirt, and a plain dark neckerchief.

MR. HOUSTON : The boss of the ranch. He is inclined to be stingy, but fundamentally an honest person. He would be surprised to know that he wasn't regarded with affection by his cowhands. He is tall, thin, and

stern-looking. He wears dark pants, high leather riding boots, a short sheepskin-lined coat, and a wide-brimmed hat. He is about thirty-five.

WINDY: Is a breezy-mannered, sunny-dispositioned, joyous and lovable young fellow of twenty-five. He has a pleasant, soothing voice and an infectious smile. He looks like a movie cowboy or like someone on a magazine cover. He wears well-tailored trousers, shining white fur chaps, a fancy wide belt studded with silver, a fine white sombrero with a snakeskin band, doeskin gloves, a doeskin embroidered vest, which he wears hanging open, a white silk shirt with a sky-blue neckerchief knotted about his neck, and highly ornamented boots.

SHERIFF LASH: A large, young-looking sheriff. He is genial and understanding, but has a definite sense of duty. He wears riding breeches and boots, a dark flannel shirt, black bow tie, short black coat, dark Stetson hat, and a holster belt with a six-shooter.

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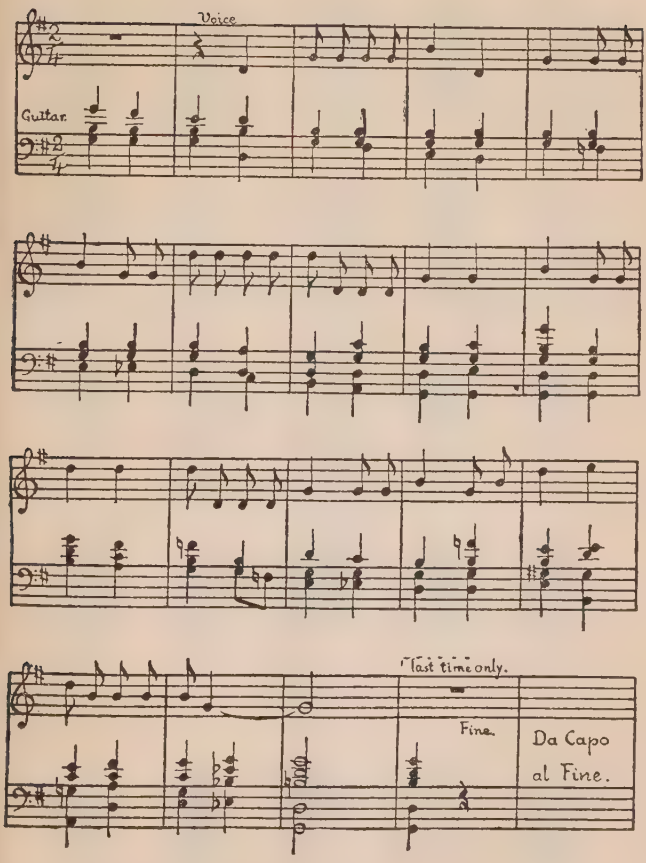
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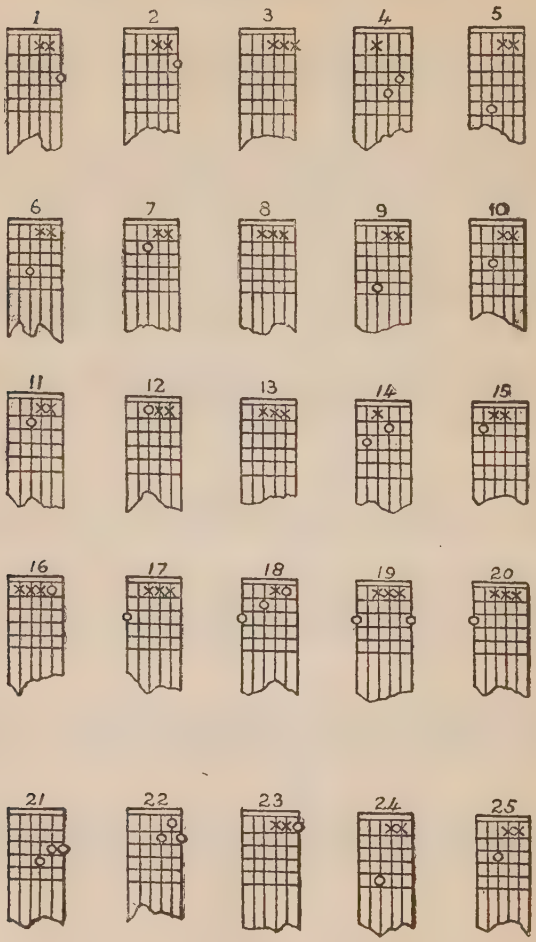

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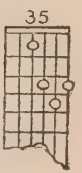

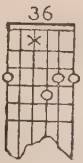

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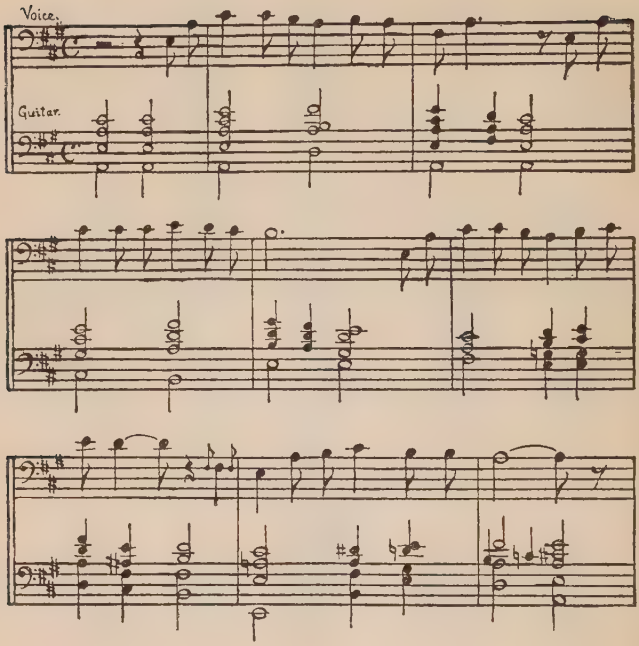
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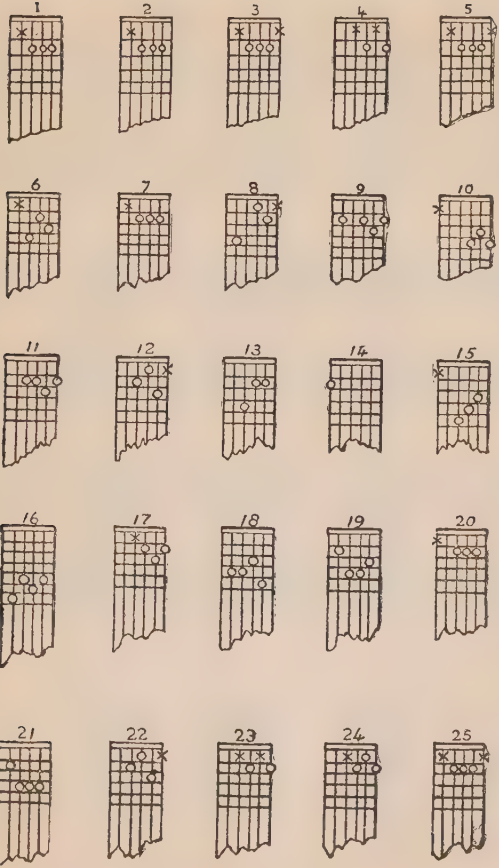

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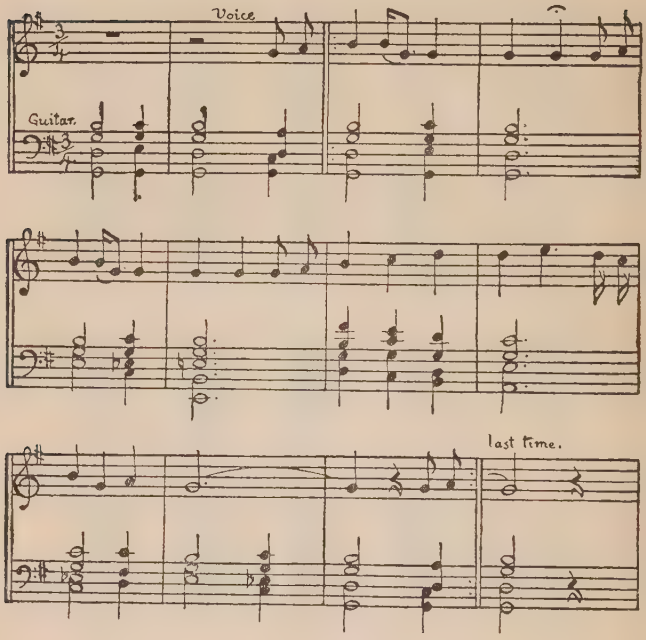
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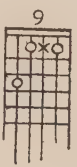
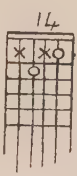
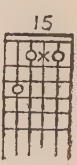






CATHERINE PARR

The play takes about ten minutes.

For *Catherine Parr* the staging is very simple. Any plain dark background, curtains, panelled wall, or screens, will serve excellently, and the only essential furniture is an antique table and three chairs, all in Tudor style if possible. The third chair can be used as a substitute for the bookcase, provided that the words "in the bookcase" are omitted from King Henry's speech. The articles required for the table are two boiled eggs in small cups or bowls (not modern egg-cups), antique-looking platters, pewter mugs, and a jug of "beer," a long, tapering loaf of bread (called "Vienna bread" by some bakers), and spoons and knives. Any old printed book will do for the Plutarch, the pages of which need not be seen by the audience. The play can very well be given in the open air, and there is no difficulty about the entry or the final exit.

A portrait of Catherine Parr can be found and copied, but she is not a well-known figure. In the case of Henry VIII, however, it is important that he should be made up and padded to resemble Hans Holbein's famous portrait. If the actor has a fairly round face the resemblance can be made very close indeed.

The stage movements of the characters are few and simple, but there must be more than those indicated by the dramatist. For instance, King Henry should be asked to decide at what point he will sit down after referring to the Plutarch; and his decision accepted, unless the producer feels strongly that it is wrong. Henry and Catherine should sit sideways to the audience, with the table between them. At the appropriate point an effective movement is for Catherine to fling herself round in her chair so that she faces the audience and speaks almost over her shoulder to Henry. Both spring to their feet, of course, when the quarrel reaches its height.

The play has a particular interest to the producer and to the young actor as an exercise in *tempo*. Success will depend to a large extent upon the producer's discernment

in deciding the varying speeds at which the dialogue is to be spoken. And the interruptions must really be interruptions, as they are too rarely with amateur actors. With vigorous performance this play can be most successful.

A word of warning on one point may be useful. In a performance for which the present writer was responsible, Henry VIII (aged 12) was an almost exact reproduction in miniature of his great original. When the curtain disclosed him cracking his egg, the audience laughed at him so loudly and so long that both he and Catherine broke down, and had to join in the laughter. This had not been anticipated, and naturally the actors had difficulty in recovering their gravity. The players should be warned that this may happen, and provided with pantomime to keep them busy until the laughter has subsided. In any case it is well for Henry not to crack his egg until the curtain is up, nor to discover its offensive state too quickly. He should peer at it, fling himself back disgustedly in his chair, and then slam down his spoon on the table as he speaks the opening line.

THE VALIANT

If this play can be given a simple realistic setting, so much the better, but it can well be played on a curtained stage, for it depends above all on controlled intensity of feeling in the players. All the characters are holding themselves in. There must be no wild outburst of feeling at any point, but every player must convey the conviction that just below the surface of his self-control there is a far greater intensity of emotion than he allows himself to express.

There are no moments of relaxation. Nervous and muscular tension must show themselves in every character throughout. But this does not mean a monotone of tension from beginning to end. The climaxes, minor and major, must be worked up to. What is said in the Acting Notes to *Allison's Lad* about the need for faithful rehearsal applies equally to *The Valiant*, and it demands from all the players complete imaginative sincerity.

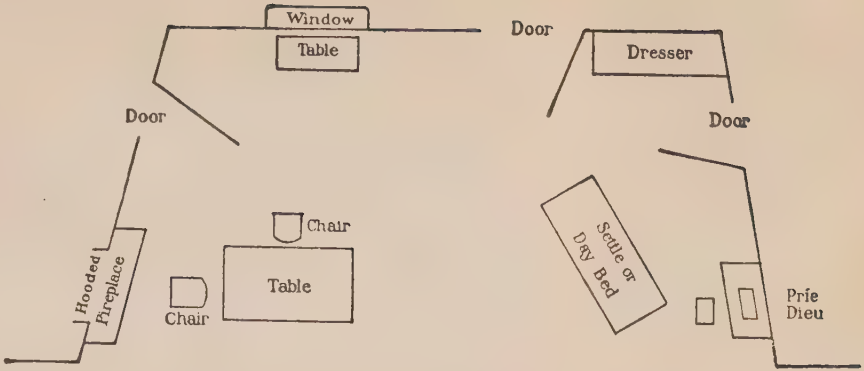
THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS

The play takes about thirty minutes in performance.

The " right " and " left " of the stage directions are those of the actors, not of the audience.

This play may very well be performed on a curtained stage; but curtains do not preclude the use of a " practical " window and door, which are particularly desirable for this play and not difficult to construct. Above and below the window the rectangular wooden framework that contains it should be covered with pieces of the material of which the stage curtains are made. Glass is not necessary. The lattice-work of the window can be made of black tape stretched from side to side of the window frame. For both window and door a plain backcloth, of black or dark blue, is better than a " winter wood scene " if the stage is curtained. Unless the setting has to be changed immediately before or after the play, it is best to have the frames for the door and window screwed securely to the stage and (where possible) to a beam above. When the change is to, or from, a plain curtain background, it is easy to arrange the curtains to draw across the window and door. In any case it is usually very convenient to hang the door upon " lift-on " hinges, so that it can be moved separately. It is a great advantage to dispense with a crossbar at the bottom of the door whenever possible, for inexperienced actors have a way of tripping over it, in the performance if not in the rehearsals. The framework of both door and window must be solid enough not to quiver violently —to the amusement of the audience—when they are touched.

The doors to right and left can be simply openings in the curtains. Almost any solid oak furniture, except pseudo-Jacobean, will do for the stage. A hooded fireplace, with a broad shelf, can be constructed without much difficulty, and should be made to stand against the curtains without any fixing. It may be necessary to raise the " hearth " above the stage level, so that the audience can see the " fire," which consists of two firedogs (of wood, painted black), with sticks and logs nailed



STAGE PLAN FOR "THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS"

across them as naturally as possible, and in the middle a wire cage covered with red paper, over an electric light bulb, preferably red.

This play especially needs simple and sincere acting, and the producer should work for this, and make sure that every player understands thoroughly the character he is representing. If there is any trace of sentimentality, or any striving after theatrical effect, or any playing to the audience—if the bishop is sanctimonious and pleased with himself, and the Convict whines about his sufferings, expecting or desiring pity, instead of remaining " a wild beast " until nearly the end—the play will be ruined.

THE PRINCESS AND THE WOODCUTTER

The time of acting is about thirty minutes.

The Princess and the Woodcutter is make-believe, and if it is played quickly and lightly, with enjoyment and without hitches, all will be well. If it drags slowly along with careful realism it will probably be very dull indeed. The audience is not asked to take it seriously at all, but only to be amused at the dramatist's lightness and deftness of touch, and the unexpected turns that he gives to a familiar situation. A cast aged eleven to thirteen, with that quality of eager alertness which marks young actors of promise, could make the play very amusing, if it were thoroughly rehearsed to secure the lightness and smoothness of movement which are essential.

Staging could hardly be simpler—green curtains, or better still a real glade or a garden, with a bench and a few logs for the woodcutter to chop. Dresses could very well be copied from Heath Robinson's illustrations to Hans Andersen, or the pictures in *Shakespeare for Community Players* or *The Bankside Costume Book*. Both King and Queen should have large crowns, and if they look as though their wearers sleep in them, so much the better. Music for the songs is obtainable from Messrs. Samuel French, but if necessary they can easily be omitted, and so of course can the revels.

CAMPBELL OF KILMOHR

The speech of the characters presents no difficulty. Supplementing his note below, Mr. Ferguson writes: "The Highlander never spoke dialect and doesn't do so now, in spite of both Scott and Stevenson. He learned English as a foreign language, but carried into his spoken use of it the idiom of his own Gaelic. And any player who follows this idiom, supplied for him in the text, can keep to his own pronunciation of the words, and be assured that he is adequately representing the original." Representation is sufficient: exact reproduction is not needed.

Author's Notes

In producing any serious play it is essential to get a clear conception of the characters in it. Here the play turns on the struggle between two sharply contrasted personalities.

Archibald Campbell, a typical eighteenth-century Edinburgh lawyer, knows not only how to browbeat and bully, but also, when occasion calls, how to wheedle and persuade. He is an expert on the baser side of human nature, glib of words and fond of resounding phrases, which he rolls off *ore rotundo*. He has imagination and believes himself free from illusions. As a Campbell he belongs to a clan that never gave itself to unprofitable causes and had a genius for finding itself on the winning side.

Mary Stewart, the old woman, is as much an unconscious idealist as Campbell is a conscious materialist. Simple, uncalculating, unsophisticated peasant as she is, she is a Highland peasant, and therefore quick, sensitive, and passionate.

Out of the conflict between the two comes the tragedy. About that tragedy two things should be carefully noted. First, that Mary Stewart has no sense of defeat, and, second, that Campbell's triumph is far more apparent than real.

But the first is much the more important in the production. Indeed, it is by revealing Mary Stewart's glory in her sacrifice that the play is lifted into the realm of true tragedy. And any failure to make her sense of triumph

manifest in her last speech will reduce the play to melodrama, and make it what is called a " sad " play. Tragedy, it may be observed, is never sad or depressing when it shows us the human spirit in some moment of grandeur. On the contrary, it thrills us ; and by revealing some particular strength in our common human nature in some imaginary conflict, fortifies us for our own real if smaller distresses. For these reasons, special care must be given to Mary Stewart's last speech. It must have exaltation. Up to the phrase, " High will his name be with the teller of fine tales," she almost declaims the words, a certain proud dignity in her tone. But after that the pace quickens, with a touch of *wildness*, as if she were " fey," while she recapitulates what has happened. At her summing up of the situation, however, in " There are things greater than death," she returns to the tone with which she began. The last words of the play, " Let us go out . . ." are quiet, with all the " grandeur " gone out of her voice, as she accepts the fact of death and sees a duty to be done. Support in this long speech is got if Morag avoids convulsive sobbing and, as was the Celtic habit, lets her sorrow find utterance in a low continuous moan or wail, while rocking herself to the rhythm of the old woman's words. But this " keening " should cease with " Let them that are children shed the tears."

The second point in the production is to make it evident that Campbell's triumph is more apparent than real. Though of far less importance than the first point, it has much to do with a delicately balanced and finished production of the play. Can you get your audience to remember that Morag does not really know where the fugitives are, but only *thinks* she knows ? (Notice how markedly this is emphasized in the scene between mother and son early in the play by the frequent reiteration of the word " tell.") When Sandeman goes out the girl is sitting huddled up on a low stool, apart. She sits with her head bent and covered by her shawl. She should try to get herself forgotten, overlooked. As far as possible she should blend with her background. Then when the moment comes that she lifts her face and echoes Campbell's " Dead ! " the audience is as much startled as Campbell himself. After that her previous rigid stillness will be understood ; inside the girl a silent struggle had

been going on as to whether she will tell or not. Campbell deceives her with his promise, and is himself, innocently, deceived by Morag—though he will only know it later.

Length of Performance.—A good production occupies not less than thirty-five minutes. It opens very slowly and quietly till Dugald appears. This leaves scope for the pace to quicken when necessary afterwards. But in a tersely written play like this remember that an audience needs time to take in the points. Therefore the danger is that of being too rapid rather than of being too slow.

Costume.—Archibald Campbell, dark coat and knee breeches of the period, with white cravat and ruffles; tricorn hat, riding cloak, and boots. James Mackenzie, similar, but not so fine; no ruffles or riding boots. Soldiers (usually three), long scarlet coats and white cross-belts, long gaiters, preferably black, tricorn hats. Captain Sandeman, similar, but crimson sash in place of cross-belt, and gold lace on hat, sword and riding boots. Women, skirts of any rough dark stuff with dark tartan shawl crossed in front and tucked into waist. Anything white or fancy is a fatal mistake. The women's "fineness" is internal, not external. Dugald Stewart, kilt of dark tartan, dark plain shirt and hose, leather belt with dirk in sheath.

Lighting.—As a high even lighting will produce a theatrical effect when thrown on so much colour, the lighting should be carefully studied. Where facilities exist throw the roof into shadow. Try to get shadows somewhere, to give depth and atmosphere. For the same reason all who enter from the storm should carry something of it in with them—say a powdering of snow or some sign of fatigue. Avoid the spick and span.

Highland Speech.—The fact that the peculiarities of Highland spoken English lie chiefly in the form of the sentences and the order of the words makes it easy to reproduce, infinitely easier than any English dialect. An occasional slight stressing of sibilants where they occur at the end of a word ("wass" for "was") would certainly be enough to recall Highland speech to any one familiar with it. Men like Campbell did of course acquire lowland Scots words and expressions such as "birze yont" ("press forward"), but such words of the sort

that come in this play have been selected for their phonetic quality—they are, that is, Scots words that are pronounced as written.

J. A. Ferguson

MICHAEL

The play takes about thirty minutes.

Author's Note

For the first production of *Michael* special music was written by Norman O'Neill. In Scenes I and II, when Michael smiles, his back is to the audience, and the effect of the smile is seen on the others in the room ; and it was then that the string music seemed strangely to fill the air.

In Scene III it was heard again when Michael is left alone in the dark room and the light gradually begins to shine around him. It continued as Michael spoke.

The music was all written for a string quartette, except that towards the end of the play, after Michael's words, " It seems to men that they live by care of themselves, but in truth it is Love alone by which they live," a faint trumpet call was heard. Michael lifted his arms, spoke the last words of the play, and the call was repeated, crashing out, as it were, at the very roof of the cottage.

Application for the original music should be made to Messrs. Curtis Brown.

Miles Malleson

The Author's Note disposes of the prime difficulty of the play, Michael's smile, and it will be seen that its effect upon Matryona and Simon will be the measure of its effect on the audience. There are no difficulties of characterization in the play, and boys or girls, or any sincere actors, can do well with it if they have been carefully coached and thoroughly rehearsed. Indeed, the best rendering will probably be an unsophisticated one, for the play retains much of that simplicity of spirit which marks the original story, and which constitutes so much of the appeal and the greatness of Tolstoy's best work. Michael's rather exacting part, in particular, demands a player who can act simply and who has an instinctive sense of poetry. If his long final speech has

the least tone of insincerity or sanctimoniousness or theatrical straining after effect, it will be ruined. A professional actor may have the technical skill to make effective a speech that he does not believe in, or understand, but the amateur, young or old, can only compensate to some extent for his technical ignorance by sincerity and enthusiasm and hard work.

A set of hessian curtains will serve excellently for this play, and if a " practical " door presents any difficulty it can be dispensed with by having the entrance in one corner, between the curtains, and the knocking " off." Table, bench, and stools should be of plain, unpainted wood (they might all be made in the school workshops), and plates and bowls of earthenware or wood or very plain china.

If accuracy in setting and costumes is desired, reference should be made to Max Tilke's *Costumes of Eastern Europe* (Benn, 1926), which gives coloured illustrations of the garments, and to Russian travel books. There is a useful picture on page 131 of *Folk Tales of the Nations* (Nelson). But there is no need for exact reproduction, and, to quote Mr. Malleson, " the clothes and the setting should give scope to producers with a certain amount of creative originality."

For the lighting in Scene III a dimmer switch is almost essential, though a possible makeshift arrangement would be to have the stage lights wired in small groups, and diminish the lighting by switching off one group at a time. Whatever the method, the light must be very dim by the time the Woman begins to tell her story, and should come from the oil-lamp that is burning on the table, supplemented, if necessary, by an electric bulb, fixed somewhere above the proscenium opening, inside, and set in a funnel of tin so that its light is thrown only in a circle around the oil-lamp. When Matryona takes the lamp away, this electric bulb is dimmed until it is out (or switched off), leaving the room in darkness until the light begins to shine upon Michael from a powerful lamp or set of lamps focused on his corner —and here again a dimmer switch is almost essential. There is very little difficulty or expense in making such a switch, and full instructions may be found in *Stage Lighting for " Little " Theatres* and other books.

SOME BOOKS FOR THE AMATEUR

" *Let's do a Play !* " Rodney Bennett (Nelson)

Plays, concerts, charades, revues, living marionettes, mock conjuring, and all kinds of amateur entertainments are dealt with in this book, from the simplest " show " got up on the spur of the moment, to the full-dress production in a public hall. Mr. Bennett proves himself an expert on rehearsal, stage-management, lighting, make-up, scenery, etc., etc., and his wide experience of amateur work with young players enables him to explain exactly how to make the best of scanty funds, very little equipment, and difficult conditions. And his book is unique because it is as useful to boys and girls " running a show on their own " as to their elders when these decide to take charge.

Ample material for a number of programmes is given in the last 140 pages, which include plays, sketches, and poems (suitable for young players of various ages from six to sixteen), by John Drinkwater, Alfred Noyes, Allan Monkhouse, Rodney Bennett, Ronald Gow, Elizabeth Fleming, Rosalind Vallance, John Hampden, Mary Cousins, etc., etc.

The Amateur Actor. Frances Mackenzie (Nelson)

This thoroughly practical book is based entirely upon the author's own experience on the professional stage and in conducting classes for amateurs. She deals with all the most important problems, artistic and technical, including speech, movement, gesture, the creation of atmosphere, working to a climax, entrances, exits, falls, etc., etc., and provides a fascinating series of exercises which enable the amateur player to master the elementary technique of acting, and which will be equally valuable to the producer who has to coach his players. There is also a remarkably good chapter on stage management.

The Small Stage and its Equipment. R. Angus Wilson (Allen and Unwin)

This deals with all the problems of temporary and permanent stage-construction, lighting, and scenery, and is invaluable to the amateur because it offers practicable solutions.

Stage Lighting. C. Harold Ridge (Heffer)
An invaluable treatise on the art and technique of the subject, which every dramatic society should possess.

British Costumes during Nineteen Centuries. Mrs. Charles A. Ashdown (Nelson)
From the time of the Britons to 1820, with a special section on ecclesiastical dress. 578 illustrations in colour and line.

Planning the Stage Wardrobe. Joyce Conyngham Green (Nelson)
A very practical little book on the designing and making of stage costumes. The writer is well acquainted with the limitations of amateur resources, both financial and technical. Here the amateur wardrobe mistress and dress-designer can learn how to make one set of costumes serve for many plays and how to ring the changes on cloak, scarf, robe, and accessories. There are twenty-three black-and-white plates illustrating about seventy costumes.

A Book of Make-up. Eric Ward (French)
A practical working handbook.

Producing School Plays. Ernest F. Dyer (Nelson)
This deals with every phase of the production and staging of plays and musical plays in schools, including chapters on the work of the producer, rehearsals, settings, scene design, lighting equipment, etc. An appendix on "How to make a switchboard," by H. Bambrough, M.Sc., and three appendixes on adjudication, etc., by John Hampden. 22 photographs of settings, etc., and 52 drawings.

A CHRISTMAS EPILOGUE

By John Hampden

Rights of performance of this Epilogue are reserved, but amateurs may give performances without payment or application for permission, provided that the following notice is given on the programme :
" A Christmas Epilogue " is performed by permission of John Hampden and Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., and is taken from *Nine Selected Plays*

A CHRISTMAS EPILOGUE

CHARACTERS

Five Boys or Girls, and Father Christmas

The Christmas concert is over. The lights in the hall are switched on, and the FIRST BOY (*or* GIRL) *appears between the curtains.*

FIRST BOY : Heap on more wood ! The wind is chill ;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed——

SECOND BOY [*standing up at the back of the hall, and shouting*] : Here ! You stop that !

FIRST BOY : Why ? What for ?

THIRD BOY [*half-way down the hall, standing up*] : Because that's the Christmas Epilogue ! You know that, don't you ?

FIRST BOY : Well, what about it ?

FOURTH AND FIFTH BOYS [*from different points in the audience, speaking together*] : What about it ! Nobody but Father Christmas is allowed to speak that !

SECOND BOY [*coming up towards the stage*] : And if any one but Father Christmas says it, all the Christmas trees in the world will fall down !

[*The other boys also begin to move towards the stage.*

FOURTH BOY: And all the nuts and oranges will go bad!

THIRD BOY : And all the Christmas puddings will swell up and burst !

FIFTH BOY : And Father Christmas will go to Timbuctoo and stay there !

SECOND BOY : So you'd better be careful, my lad.

[*By this time they have all reached the front, and stand*

in a group, looking up at the FIRST BOY. *He stoops over the footlights to speak to them.*

FIRST BOY [*aghast*]: But what can we do? We *must* have an Epilogue!

FIFTH BOY: Have you asked Father Christmas to come and say it?

FIRST BOY: Great Scott! I never thought of that!

FOURTH BOY: Well, you didn't expect him to come if you didn't ask him, did you?

THIRD BOY: It's not Christmas yet, and he must be jolly busy, anyway.

FOURTH BOY: Come on, you chaps, let's call him!

SECOND BOY: Good idea.

ALL [*facing the audience, and calling*]: Father Christmas! Fa—ther Christmas!

[*They listen intently for a moment.*

SECOND BOY: Nothing doing.

FIRST BOY: Perhaps he's offended, and won't come.

THIRD BOY: Not he! He's a jolly good sort. He doesn't get offended.

FIFTH BOY: Perhaps he's a long way away. Let's try again.

ALL: Father Christmas! Father Christmas!

[*They listen again.*

FIRST BOY: I can't hear anything—can you?

FOURTH AND FIFTH BOYS: No.

THIRD BOY: I know. There isn't any chimney in this place. He can't get in!

[*If there is a chimney, this speech should be, "I know! We ought to have shouted up the chimney!" and the next four speeches should be omitted, and they all go and call up the chimney.*

FOURTH BOY: Well, that's settled it!

SECOND BOY: I'm not so sure. He must have found other ways of getting in, what with all this central heating and prefabricated houses with chimneys that any one would get stuck in!

FIFTH BOY: Oh, let's try once more, anyhow.

FIRST BOY : Oh yes, come on !

ALL : Father Christmas ! Father Christmas !

[*They listen. There is a faint, far-away tinkle of little bells.*

FIRST BOY : Hooray ! Listen !

[*They listen again. The bells sound nearer. A voice is heard singing a carol.*

FIRST BOY : Hooray ! He's coming !

[*All lights are switched off. In the darkness the* FIRST BOY *slips through the curtains and disappears ; the others withdraw to the sides of the hall. The curtains part and* FATHER CHRISTMAS *appears, carrying on a pole a brilliant red lantern which throws its light upon his head and shoulders.*

FATHER CHRISTMAS : Heap on more wood ! the wind is chill ; [1]

But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep old Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer :
E'en, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Yule more deep the mead did drain ;
And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night ;
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung ;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung ;
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
The hall was dressed with holly green ;
Forth to the wood did merry men go
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;

[1] The first forty-nine lines are taken from *Marmion*, by Sir Walter Scott.

Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.
The huge hall table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man ;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
There the huge sirloin reeked ; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie ;
Nor failed old England to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din ;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made ;
But oh ! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light !
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale ;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.
So here come I to wish you all
The joys of Christmas festival,
Good cheer as in old days gone by,
Glad hearts, free minds, and good mince-pie,
A happy family round the fire,
And unto each his heart's desire.

[*The little bells are heard again.*

My reindeer scents the Lapland snow ;
The sleigh-bells jingle ; I must go,
For many a village, many a town,

Before the Christmas stars go down,
Awaits my blessing on its glee,
That joy may reign from sea to sea.
[*He raises the lantern a little.*
Wassail! Wassail! To all, good cheer!
Old Father Christmas gives you here
A Happy Christmas, Glad New Year!
[*Black-out including the lantern. When the hall lights are switched on again,* FATHER CHRISTMAS *has disappeared.*

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